

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EARLY-CAREER  
FOLKLORISTS:  
A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

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Compiled by Elaine Thatcher  
With assistance from Lisa Duskin-Goede

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## PREFACE

As part of the 2003 American Folklore Society Annual Meeting, the Society and the Fund for Folk Culture collaborated to organize a series of panels and roundtable discussions on Professional Development in Folklore. The sessions were inspired by many previous conversations with folklore graduate students and new professionals, who had expressed concerns about a perceived lack of jobs and opportunities that make full use of their training. The day-and-a-half long series spanned the academic, public and applied sectors of the field, and included presentations by folklorists working in a wide range of professional settings. We asked presenters to reflect upon their careers and to share their best advice with those entering the field today.

These proceedings, organized as they were presented at the annual meeting, include both written papers and summaries of presentations that retain the sense of the spoken word. Several appendices delve into more detail on the topics of faculty hiring, resume writing, annual activities reports for performance reviews, and folklife archives. Some presenters provided contact information for those who would like to address follow-up questions on specific areas. Although it is geared towards graduate students and new professionals entering the field, we expect that this report will be of interest to colleagues at all stages of their careers.

The proceedings include practical information, hard-earned wisdom and philosophical insights. Even within the diversity of perspectives presented here, however, one common thread ran through the presentations: There are many ways to be a folklorist, and many paths to get there. All of the presenters encouraged new professionals to pay their dues, follow their hearts, seek guidance, and have the courage and creativity to find the career path that best matches their own skills and passions.

We gratefully acknowledge the National Endowment for the Arts for its support of these sessions. We also thank all of those who participated in what we hope will be a regular feature of American Folklore Society annual meetings. Finally, we appreciate the work of Elaine Thatcher and her assistant Lisa Duskin-Goede, who compiled and edited these proceedings.

Timothy Lloyd, Executive Director  
American Folklore Society

Laura R. Marcus, Program Associate  
The Fund for Folk Culture

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## **Being the Lone Folklorist**

How do solo folklorists working in academic departments, public agencies, or as independents carry out their work and build alliances to strengthen their positions?

### **Presenters:**

**Olga Nájera-Ramírez** (University of California, Santa Cruz)

**Maida Owens** (Louisiana Division of the Arts Folklife Program, Baton Rouge)

**Elaine Thatcher** (Utah State University Mountain West Center for Regional Studies/  
Independent Folklorist, Logan)

**Margaret R. Yocom** (George Mason University, Fairfax VA)

### **Main points:**

#### *When applying for a job*

1. Communicate how your experience and skills will benefit the employer or client. Be able to demonstrate that folklore, if you use that term, has broad applications and is not a trivial subject as many people believe.
2. Articulate what you need in order to succeed: time, space, equipment, your own phone, etc.
3. Do research on the job you are applying for so you don't step on the toes of people already doing some of the things you want to do. Know the personalities involved. Speak to the different ways that your interests come together.
4. Don't claim to be able to do more than you really can.
5. Keep your work at the highest standards. Then people will seek you out. This is applicable in institutions and especially so for independent folklorists.
6. Don't expect top dollar for your work when you are just starting out.

#### *Once you have a job*

1. Make friends with your colleagues. In an academic setting, this can include arranging exchanges to teach in each other's classes, recommending that students take other's courses. Find ways that your courses can help fill general education requirements.
2. Network: make friends with people outside your immediate place of work. Attend meetings and conferences, serve on committees.
3. Use your fieldwork skills in the office to learn what is appropriate within the office culture. Watch for signs that you are not fitting in and take steps to correct the situation.
4. Be a self-starter with a vision for your job. Those around you may not know what a folklorist is supposed to do or can do, so you need to know. Set a schedule and stick to it as much as possible.
5. Find mentors, both within folklore (may be in some other institution) and within the office culture.
6. Keep in touch with the people you serve.
7. Make yourself indispensable. In public folklore, this may mean being the person who knows how to proofread, or the one who understands all the equipment. In an academic setting, it may mean that you are willing to teach the courses they need taught. But don't let yourself become pigeonholed in one niche.

8. Identify your skill sets and polish them, then flaunt them.
9. Learn negotiation and compromise, and know what you are willing to give up and what you are not willing to give up.
10. Think creatively and entrepreneurially.
11. Develop “double-voicedness”—the ability to speak the language not only of your own field, but also that of your colleagues.
12. Be a coalition builder to make things happen through alliances with non-folklore colleagues.
13. In an academic setting, building a folklore archive can be a way of connecting with other institutions, individuals, and of establishing a “presence.”
14. Get the word “folklore” out there where people can see it.
15. Do what you are asked to do when you enter a job. Later, when you have built credibility and friendships, you can start expanding toward more of what you want to do. In academia, you may be asked to teach general education courses. Later you can develop folklore courses.
16. Ask your boss what you can do to help.
17. Analyze what you can control and what you can’t in a job, then accept what you can’t change and work around the obstacles.
18. Make sure your supervisor has the necessary language at hand to defend your position should that become necessary. Communicate frequently with him/her about what you are doing.

***Olga Nájera-Ramírez, [Olga@ucsc.edu](mailto:Olga@ucsc.edu)***

I am an anthropologist, though I am able to teach almost any course I want. When I went to UC-SC, there was only one folklore course. I developed a folklore course for anthropologists and other courses that I thought should be in the curriculum. One disadvantage of being the lone folklorist is that you can’t teach everything. I have constructed the folklore class for anthropology students as sort of a foundation class, to give an overview of some of the debates in the field. I introduce the idea that folklore is fun, but I also have a lot of material on issues needing to be discussed. I introduce the political side of folklore. The classes tend to be very big, and some students have to wait to take it. As an anthropologist I have to teach other basic classes as well.

I have colleagues who have some interest in folklore, and I can arrange exchanges where I lecture in their classes and vice-versa. Other professors may have strengths to add to the discipline. In American Studies, there is a history of consciousness studies. I recommend those and other courses to my students. You can network with colleagues in gender and ethnic studies. In foundational courses, I try to figure out what is not being covered. There are no field projects in the community, so I try to help students find projects. I teach one class about the Border that helps satisfy the social science requirements. I also teach a seminar called Advanced Folkloristics. I have the students do individuals projects and meet once a week with them. There are other courses that relate, such as the Anthropology of Dance and Cultural Performance. This is a range of the things that can be done, and the overlap that occurs. Folklore has always been interdisciplinary.

***Maida Owens***

I’ve been managing the folk arts program at the Louisiana Division of the Arts for fifteen years. For this presentation I was concerned, because I never thought of myself as the lone folklorist. I never

felt that way because of the networking that I do. Within public folklore there are many agencies with many possible missions. If you are in a brand new position, you are either trying to establish something, or trying to follow someone. The most important thing is that you have fieldwork skills. Use them in the office. I probably use more fieldwork skills in the office than in the field.

You must understand the mission, scope, and mandate of the agency. Some folk arts programs have failed and folklorists have not been sought after because of mismatches. Folklorists are being paid to do a job and you need to understand what the focus of the job is. You will survive if you balance these factors.

You must be a self-starter. But you have to balance that with the mission of the agency. I have had five different bosses in fifteen years, and each one has made it seem like a completely different agency. Some bosses haven't known what I did. The same goes for coworkers. Some coworkers don't have a clue what you do on a daily basis, so you have to negotiate the bureaucracy, and you have to be self-starter to survive. Those around you may not have a clue as to what you are supposed to do, so you need to know, and you need to watch for red flags indicating that you are not fitting in somehow.

You need at least two mentors. The first is your folklore mentor, the person you can call and get advice from and talk with about your programs and day-to-day things. The other mentor is the person who knows how to survive in an office. You have to learn how to be a bureaucrat, to play the game. Your fieldwork skills make that possible. Find a mentor for whatever field you are in.

Networking is also important. I was fortunate in finding a network. My mission now is to weave together all the folklorists in the state. I wanted to weave together a network, and find out how different people played into the network. All the folklorists knew each other and were supportive. I use the term "cultural specialists" for all the people who have an interest in folklore in the state—not just folklorists. I keep a mailing list of everyone in the state of people who fits into this category. You need to make yourself indispensable. Know how to work all the equipment, like new cameras, recording technology, etc. I often teach the staff how to use new equipment. But you need to be careful, because this can backfire. You can become pigeonholed. Figure out your strategy, figure out your boss. Figure out how much the boss wants you to check in with him/her. Does s/he turn you loose and not inquire for months, or do they want a weekly follow-up?

**Elaine Thatcher**, [elaine.thatcher@usu.edu](mailto:elaine.thatcher@usu.edu)

I'm currently an employee at Utah State University as Associate Director of the Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, though I have spent many years as an independent folklorist, both while employed by someone else and just on my own. I have had five jobs in the past twenty years, and lots of consulting work. Sometimes I've done the consulting while an employee for an organization, and sometimes consulting has been my sole source of income. When you are a lone folklorist, whether you are working independently or for an agency, you need to think about your skill sets. One of your main skill sets needs to be your fieldwork skills. I polished mine by taking short-term contract jobs. This gives you the experience of working with a variety of cultures and colleagues. I graduated from a program that was unknown at the time, and I felt the need to get out and learn as much as I could. I was very lucky to be hired by the Library of Congress for the

Pinelands (New Jersey) Folklife Project in the early 1980s. That was where I really learned to do fieldwork. So one way you can improve your fieldwork skills is to be willing to travel around to different short-term jobs. You can also polish those skills by going to field schools, AFS conferences, local conferences, and others where you can get your technological skills upgraded, and you can participate in discussions of current issues.

Communication skills also are important. You need to be able to effectively communicate to others what you do, what folklore is, and why fieldwork is important. You need to make sure your agency understands why you need to be out of the office so much, or you run the risk of being viewed by coworkers as someone who doesn't really work. (It's a fact of life that colleagues who do not travel for their jobs may view business travel as some kind of incredible perk. For those of us who do travel to the point of exhaustion, the prospect of another trip can be discouraging, especially when you see the work piling up in the office.) Be helpful to your colleagues, explain things. Be able to communicate how your experience and skill benefit the client/ employer. You need to be able to explain what you can do for them. This can allow you to enter areas that otherwise would not be open to folklorists. For instance, I did some work for a city planning commission, doing fieldwork to identify elements of neighborhood character. I couldn't have done that without the ability to explain how my methodology (without calling it folklore) could benefit them.

You also need to be able to articulate what you need to succeed. This is true when you are an employee, but it is especially true if you are a consultant. You need field time, but you need writing time. If the client has budgeted for ten days of fieldwork without any additional time for writing notes, logging tapes, and writing the final report, you need to gently tell them that their ten days will only buy about five days in the field, and that's stretching it if there is a lot of tape to log. Figure out how much time you need to finish the work. Articulate what you need in clerical support, what equipment you need. As an independent folklorist, you will be expected to have your own tape recorder, camera, and transcriber. You will need access to a computer, and ideally that is your own as well. If you are independent you need to have all of that yourself. (You can take all these equipment purchases off of your taxes.) You need long distance telephone access and computer access to reach interviewees and to confer with other folklorists and mentors. You may need archival space and support. Can you make arrangements for where all your stuff is going to end up? Who is going to own it? You need to be able to communicate all those things. You need to be able to outline why your fee is what it is—all your expenses such as equipment, bookkeeping, promotion, supplies, etc., need to be factored in to figure out your fee. Other skills, such as negotiation skills, help you get what you need from your client or your employer.

You also need to learn to compromise on certain things. Know what you can and can't give up. Are you willing to take on non-folklore duties, to work in a less than perfect space, or to change the wording of something you have written so as not offend others?

To be an independent folklorist, or to be the lone folklorist in an organization, you must be self-starting and able to work independently. If you get depressed working alone, maybe it's not the right kind of work for you. Do you have a vision of your work, a sense of what you want to accomplish, a sense of direction? Do you have ideas about where to find funding? Can you set a schedule and stick to it?



Creativity is important. As an independent, you need to figure out how to pitch to others what you can do for them. You need the creativity to see opportunities where others might not see them. You might end up working for a farmers market or a big corporation. You need to be creative and entrepreneurial.

Networking is necessary. That's how you get your contacts for jobs. Through many years of working for agencies both as an employee and a consultant, I have become known to people. Much of the time, I don't need to seek work, because people come to me with requests for my services. You need to attend all kinds of meetings—chamber of commerce, planning, service organizations, etc. You never know what kind of work will bubble up. My business partner and I were even working on getting to know lawyers who worked on land issues, because we saw a potential opportunity for documenting the history of conservation easement lands.

**Margaret R. Yocom**, [myocom@gmu.edu](mailto:myocom@gmu.edu), or <http://mason.gmu.edu/~myocom>

*(Ed. Note: This is the paper that Dr. Yocom read, not a summary of her remarks.)*

With great joy, I can say that as of Fall 2001, after twenty-five years of going it alone, I am no longer a lone folklorist. My colleague Debra Shutika is with me. So, my comments might be titled, "How to turn in your lone star."

Throughout my twenty-six years at George Mason, I've worked to make the University a place where folklore can thrive. And, one of my goals was always to work so that whenever I retired, my department would hire another folklorist to carry on. But when it came time to propose fields for the next year's hires, my colleague Coilin Owens, then our departmental administrative assistant told me, "I think we can make an argument for a second folklorist now." It turned out we could count the number of students who *tried* to register for my folklore courses. Those numbers were very persuasive.

The organizers of this session have asked me to speak about strategies that assistant professors could use as they begin their careers in university departments. Our situations are always mediated by the particular universities where we teach, but I hope that most of my comments will be broadly applicable.

I've also attached copies of the presentation (see Appendix A) I made to my department at the 2000 Spring meeting as we discussed in what areas we might hire in during Fall 2000.

- Publish, teach well, do good service to get tenure. If your department doesn't have a mentorship program for junior faculty, choose one or two faculty members to mentor you.
- Develop "double-voicedness": learn the ways of your home department and its discipline (English, American Studies, etc.) and learn the ways of the discipline of folklore. Your home department will probably never learn your language; be ready to translate at every turn. Understand that very few, if any, of your colleagues will ever have had a folklore course themselves. Learn what their perceptions of folklore are and offer them your vision.
- Give relevant folklore references (books, articles, etc.) to colleagues who may be interested.

- Volunteer to give guest lectures in the classrooms of colleagues; suggest the topics you could talk about.
- Invite colleagues and students to give presentations at AFS. Set up panels for them.
- Be willing to teach other courses besides folklore: composition, introductory literature, popular culture, etc.
- Build up a reputation as a good department member: perform excellent service on key committees, in the department and beyond.
- Serve on curriculum committees in the department and beyond. Learn how to create and insert more folklore into the curriculum. Suggest ways that folklore materials could be added to their courses.
- Work to increase the number of folklore courses you teach. Offer to teach a general education course if the additional course you're offering doesn't fill, but, chances are, it will fill.
- Survey your students to find out what new course in folklore they'd be most interested in taking.
- Look for topics in folklore that connect with topics of your colleagues and colleagues in other departments: ethnography, transnational and postcolonial theories, debates on authenticity.
- Look for colleagues who have issues in common with you. For me, some good colleagues have been composition specialists who also do ethnography; creative non-fiction writers who do archival research and interviews; African American literature colleagues who teach about African American speech traditions, storytelling, and more; medieval and renaissance literature specialists; younger faculty interested in reader response theory and world literature.
- Create an ad hoc committee of colleagues who include folklore in their courses (African American literature) or who teach folklore-related courses (Chaucer).
- Learn new technology and be willing to help your department colleagues learn.
- Talk with colleagues in your department and across campus about your research. Establish reading groups, ask for help with references, ask people to read drafts of your writings.
- Establish good relations with other departments that teach folklore-related materials: Anthropology, Art History. Become friends with colleagues in these departments. Cross-list courses.
- Advertise courses to likely groups of students. For me, two groups have been MFA students (fiction, poetry, and especially non-fiction writing) and Professional Writing & Editing graduate students who want interviews to be a part of their research.
- Use new technology to operate and advertise your folklore offerings: build websites, establish an e-mail list serve.
- Get help. See what undergraduate and graduate research assistantships you can get to help you build websites, bring in speakers, do your research, and more.
- Establish a way for alumni to contribute money to the folklore program.
- Make handouts, brochures, logos to make the program more visible.

- Flaunt your stuff. Take material culture items, music to class and guest lectures. Tell stories; sing in class and in guest lectures. Use the best of what we folklorists have to offer. Have fun and show your passion.
- Team-teach.
- Establish an archive of student papers based on fieldwork. Put materials on the web. Exhibit these at appropriate venues on campus. Your library may be interested in these materials for their special collections.
- Get to know the person in your library who oversees the folklore collection. Build your book, journal, media holdings in folklore.
- Make sure “folklore” has a presence in your college catalogue. Get “folklore” in the index pages to make it more visible, for example.
- Get the word “folklore” in the title and description of all your courses. For example, get folklore courses out of “special topics” courses where “folklore” isn’t in the title and create “special topics in folklore” courses. Or, if folklore has to remain one of the several courses offered under a “special topics” rubric, get “folklore” in the course description.
- Bring in visiting folklorists and folk artists for a lecture, performance, or for longer. Find sources of funding outside of your department.
- You may be able to establish a folklore minor in your department or your college of arts and sciences, even as a lone folklorist. Find other faculty (classics, modern language, art history, anthropology, history) who want to partner with you; many people interested in mythology will want to collaborate.
- When establishing new programs, visit the chairs of departments who will be affected. You often need their permission, but it’s a good chance to tell them what you do and what folklore is. One said to me after I explained the possible linkages between folklore and communication, “*Now* I understand what folklore is!”
- World literature is a growing field. Offer your expertise since you have already, always been working with world texts.
- Build alliances with other folklorists in your area who work at other universities, public positions, and on independent projects. Create internships and jobs for your students.
- Be active in AFS, regional, and state folklore meetings. Bring a meeting to your campus.
- Pick your fights. You can’t fight for everything you want, but you can fight for the issues that are most crucial to keeping folklore healthy and growing.

Be persistent. If your chair or department votes no on one of your proposals, wait. In another few years, with another chair or new department members, you may well get your proposal accepted. Call on your folklore colleagues to write letters for you.

### ***Being the Lone Folklorist: Questions and Answers***

#### **Q: What kind of classes are you eventually going to be asked to teach?**

Nájera-Ramírez: I was hired as anthropologist who happened to have a folklore specialty, so I am not exclusively folklore. Once you are there you can widen that gap. I teach communication anthropology, which is some of the basics of anthropology, current issues, reading, writing, and

speaking skills, so students can succeed in upper division. Many of the students have opted to go to a community college before coming to the university. Students are shocked at the work load once they transfer from community college to go regular college. I teach core anthropology courses, ten units in fall, five units in winter. I taught ethnographic methods and also specialty courses in addition to the disciplines. I teach some comparative courses. My college wanted me to teach about two ethnic groups, African American and Mexican American comparative, with some kind of performance every week in my seminar. One of my areas is dance, Mexican dance. Latin Americana and Latino Studies helps me produce the dance performance every year.

Yocom: For me, the pattern has been a wider dispersal of courses in the beginning, then narrowing to folklore as time goes on. I started with writing, and later when my strengths were noticed, I was asked to teach more in American Studies. As you work your way into the department, the other courses help you get recognized. Think about all the ways you can help your department. They like to hear you ask what you can do to help. For example, I taught my students to study the oral nature of *Beowulf*. I am always looking for ways to be of service, to let them know I am a folklorist and also have skills in literature.

**Q: Your suggestion is to state what you can teach?**

Yocom: You should scope out your department. You don't want to claim to be able to do more than you really can; don't step on the toes of people who already teach some of the things you would like to do. Head for the service courses first, work your way into doing other things.

Nájera-Ramírez: I second that you should do your research on the job you are applying for. What are the specialties, the politics? You will want to do the staples, the core courses along with the special courses. You do your specialty. Plus you can do these other things without stepping on other people's toes. Market yourself as an available resource with lots of possibilities.

Audience Comment: Team teaching is an excellent way to make your way into other areas. It is a great way to work your way into other things you want to do. I have been a folklorist for thirty-three years and have moved from team teaching in Canadian science classes into transformation of culture courses, to oral traditions into a range of courses. I have been able to establish a children's studies program, which is my special area. This has all been possible because of team teaching and belonging to six graduate programs.

**Q: I work with local government, helping with research. In my opinion as a folklorist, it is beneficial not to talk folklore, because as folklorists we are trained with our own set of skills, tools and languages. If you walk in and talk about it, you get a crossed-eyed look. It is not necessary to push folklore, but consider the tools of folklore your secret weapon. So, the question is, do you need to be hell-bent on making everyone know you are a folklorist?**

Thatcher: It depends on the person. I prefer to identify myself as a folklorist. I also know some folklorists who are working in other fields, where "folklorist" means nothing. You can say, "I know how to interview." You can name your skill sets instead of your discipline.

Owens: I don't push it. You can bring it up if it is appropriate. My position was nine years old when I took it; it was well established. Nick Spitzer had been in it before. Nick had an enormous amount

of products. I wanted to build infrastructure. That's not as splashy, but it is a strategic decision to decide whether to downplay my folklorist status, or to make it known up front. Also, always keep your work at the highest standards. Then people will start seeking YOU out. You may not be able to or want to do everything, but people will start asking. It's very important to think strategically about where you are going.

**Q: I am an independent folklorist. I work with a library, and my goal is to save the audio collection. I have got problems with my boss, and I feel I don't have the support I need to preserve this collection.**

Owens: You have to analyze the structure and where you fit in the structure. What do you have control over or not have control over? What is possible to change, and what is not in your particular bureaucracy? Then accept what you can't change, and work around the obstacles.

Long-term relationships are just as important as short. Do whatever it takes to get the job done and not get fired. Figure out what you do or don't have.

Yocom: As more and more work gets out-sourced, and more and more adjunct faculty are hired, people are forming associations so there will be more like you—people of the same mind, to develop special strategies.

Thatcher: Give your supervisor the language s/he needs to defend your position; give him written documents and materials to help him/her communicate what you are doing. I've learned to write grants within the university system, which is pretty convoluted. Learn to negotiate the system.

**Q: I got a job at the University of Houston in Hispanic Studies, Latin American Studies. They never questioned my degree in folklore. When should I start suggesting other courses? What strategy is recommended to get started on teaching other courses?**

Nájera-Ramírez: Our curriculum committee meets in the fall, where courses are submitted that people would like to teach. You give a little blurb on the course, and suggest when you could teach it. Propose a list of courses that you would like to teach. You would not need to have the curriculum developed, just a description of what you would like teach. Don't assume that they will not want them. Put your ideas down and submit them to your undergraduate director. Also let them know that your courses are well attended. They may find ways in which you are helping them fulfill needs.

Owens: Find out whether submitting a memo is the culture of your office or not; how to go about proposing the courses. It may be different in each school.

Yocom: I would talk to the people who are your friends right now. You can get a feel for if your department would welcome new courses or not. Talk to others about your ideas. Have in your mind the courses you would like to teach. In what way can these courses be of service to others on the books? If there are other courses in the area, you can show how they have done. You can allay some of their nervousness if you can show that you will teach whatever course they want if it fails.

**Q: How would you deal with going into a job interview where you are facing different people with different desires and perspectives? For example, you might be interviewing in**

**combined departments like English, Folklore and Environmental Studies. I'm not sure how to go into a situation like this. What is the dynamic between being aggressive and passive?**

Yocom: You could be well positioned in that situation. Many departments would like to bring together creative nonfiction, literary criticism, and folklore. Do a lot of homework in the departments where you will be doing the interviewing. What egos are there? Speak to the different ways that your interests come together.

Comment: Look at what is being offered, how can you add to it? What courses could you create that would help add something to the program?

**Q: Do you think there are going to be more opportunities for independent folklorists, or fewer?**

Owens: It differs from state to state. My state is an oil state, so we had no budget cuts last year. But there is a trend toward out-sourcing. The odds of getting a new position are low, but I did get one. You never know what is going to be offered. Independents are part of the private sector. I think they are incredibly important. There are going to be fewer and fewer state or city positions. This is a national trend. People who can act as professionals, deliver, negotiate contracts, etc. are the ones I will hire—they are easier to work with. I now have oversight, and I like it when the folklorists make it easy for me. If people don't have a lot of grief over you, then you'll have more jobs.

Thatcher: The budget crunches will come and go. As an independent, don't panic when there is a lull. A major trend is that state folklorists have less and less time to do fieldwork. They need fieldworkers to go out and do what they don't have time to do. There is a list of independents on the AFS website, listed by their states.

**Q: Is there the possibility to be planted in a particular region and still take contracts?**

Thatcher: I took more out-of-region opportunities at first, because I had fewer options when I started out than I do now. The more you know about a certain area, the more you will be asked when work comes up relating to it.

Owens: Are you are willing to do other things besides fieldwork? I depend on people being flexible and available for folklore contracting.

**Q: What is the monetary range for some of these contracts?**

Thatcher: My rate, at this time of my career, is \$350 per day, though I'm thinking of raising my prices because I'm still too busy.

Andrea Graham: You can charge a lower daily rate for longer-term contracts.

Tim Lloyd: There is a policy statement on the AFS website to help when you are looking to hire an independent folklorist.

Thatcher: A rule of thumb is this: For the region in which you are working, the price should be in the range of the daily rate for comparable work by an employee, then double it. As an independent you have your own taxes, insurance, supplies, etc. to pay for. I also found that for every day I

worked for someone else, I needed a day in support of that work to do my accounting, paperwork, networking, promotion, etc.

Owens: When you are starting out you don't start at top dollar. I will not pay someone top dollar if it is their first contract job.

**Q: Did you ever have any problems or restrictions on your research from your local community?**

Yocom: No one has ever told me not to do something or has given me a problem. I have understood from the beginning and tried to pay the price for my work in the public sector. I have many non-refereed publications. You take a lower salary, but if you love the work it is okay.

Nájera-Ramírez: I have not had restrictions, but you do get reviewed every two years, and you must summarize your accomplishments. Whatever work you do, you have to translate it into what you have done. People may not understand what the value is of what you do. You have to explain things to them, to people who are not in your area.

## **Presenting Yourself in the Academic and Public Job Market**

As a folklorist, how do you present your goals, accomplishments, and potential contributions to employers outside the field?

### **Presenters:**

**Peggy Bulger** (Director, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC)

**Jens Lund** (Independent Folklorist, Olympia, Washington)

**William A. “Bert” Wilson** (Retired Professor and Department Head, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah)

### **Main points:**

#### *General*

1. Network.
2. Learn as much as possible about a prospective employer’s emphases and approaches before applying.
3. Let employers know how your folklore training will help them reach their institutional goals.
4. Develop a presence for folklore that your employer can’t deny (though don’t make them antagonistic by not paying attention to business). One way to do this is to take speaking engagements whenever possible, for small civic clubs, libraries, conferences, etc.
5. Leave yourself open to new experiences; your skills will rise to the surface, and you will end up in the job you should have. There are many ways to be a folklorist, whether as a teacher, fieldworker, administrator, archivist, or myriad other roles.
6. Attend AFS. You need to get to know people in the field, because they may be helpful to you in finding a job.
7. Don’t refrain from applying for a job just because you think you are not qualified (within reason). You don’t know what they are looking for. Keep your options open.
8. Don’t lie on applications. It will become very apparent in the interview what your strengths and weaknesses are.
9. Don’t be modest, either. Let them know the experience you have that might fit their needs.

#### *Public sector work*

1. When first out of school, be flexible. In public folklore, you may end up staying in one place and doing whatever comes along, or traveling all over and doing one thing.
2. Build your cultural network with people outside folklore—in libraries, museums, PBS stations, etc. You may become indispensable to what they are doing, and you can help them with their projects.
3. If you want to work in a particular state, you need to know who the folklorists are there.

#### *Academic work*

1. Because most academic jobs will be in non-folklore departments, you need to get very broad training with minors in fields outside folklore.



2. Practice “hallology,” moving up and down the halls and talking to people in their offices who are willing to talk. Discover their interests, relate their interests to yours, volunteer to do guest lectures, etc. These friendships pay off later when you need something.
3. If you want an academic job, you need to gain experience in publishing articles, doing editorial work, and teaching.

#### *Independent work*

1. Being willing to try new things and doing them well will build your reputation. Your reputation is what produces new opportunities, and in the case of independent folklorists, new contracts. Pay your dues, learn as many skills as you can.
2. If you are interested in being an independent folklorist, be prepared for high expenses (most are tax-deductible).

#### **Jens Lund**, [jenslund@earthlink.net](mailto:jenslund@earthlink.net)

As an independent folklorist, I can identify certain turning points in my career that have helped me gain a reputation in the field. My reputation is what produces contracts for me—people call me. I don’t need to go hunting for jobs that much. What were those turning points?

I first did fieldwork for hire twenty-eight years ago when I was a student. I did fieldwork in Kansas and Nebraska. Then in 1976, I did work in Michigan and Wisconsin for the bicentennial Smithsonian folklife festival. Hundreds of folklorists have Smithsonian experience now, but then I was unique. That was the first turning point—I was still a graduate student. The cachet of having worked for the Smithsonian was such that people started calling me up. I got several years of contracts from Eastern Illinois University and got more experience in the agricultural Midwest.

The next turning point was in 1977—I was asked to work on the Library of Congress’s Chicago Ethnic Arts Project. One of the communities studied was Scandinavian, so I was hired. That put the Library of Congress on my resume, and I now had urban as well as rural experience. All of this went on my resume.

The work I did on my dissertation through all this had to do with fisheries on the rivers—occupational and environmental folklife. So I became an “expert” on that type of subject. Then I was hired for the Library of Congress’s Pinelands Folklife Project. About the same time, I was employed as kind of extension faculty for Indiana University, training people to do oral histories. I had to learn to do that. So now I was also an oral historian.

All of this previous experience, including work with environmental and occupational folklore, got me a fieldwork job in Alaska in 1984.

Then I heard there was going to be a folk arts coordinator position funded in Washington State, and I stopped there while traveling from Alaska. I ended up taking that position, but it was a difficult situation due to multiple organizations being involved. I created a board of directors and a 501(c)(3), which added more experience to my resume. Then, as part of a regional effort, I was asked to help with cowboy poetry fieldwork, which gave me expertise in that area and led to my working with other occupational poets such as fishermen and loggers.

Since then I have done contract work mostly in the West. My work has covered twenty-one states, one Canadian province, and brief consulting work in nine other states.

Can you make a living at this? Sort of. My spouse carries medical insurance. In a typical year, I gross \$60,000, and net about \$25,000. I take every deduction I can. I am also a sole proprietor.

Is it worth it? Yes. Folklore, as far as I'm concerned, is as much, or even more than other things, a social movement that unites people who believe in something other than corporate America. We are doing God's work here. So in that context, like circuit preachers, revolutionaries, etc., then I guess it is worth it. I've met amazing people, and had extraordinary experiences.

Is this something you can do? You need to ask yourself if you can move around. The most basic message is—pay your dues, learn as many skills as you can. Over the years I became a better and better photographer, recording technician, etc. You need to network, network, network. People now call me—I don't have to market myself actively. You need to learn other skills, too—archiving, museology, administration. Someday I'm going to be too old to sleep in motels and drive back roads after dark, etc. There's an online book by Jan Rosenberg called *Southern Journey* ([www.ariga.com/southernjourney/](http://www.ariga.com/southernjourney/)). Her account of being a Jewish woman from Massachusetts and becoming a part of rural southern society in her fieldwork is amazing.

**Bert Wilson**, [william.wilson9@comcast.net](mailto:william.wilson9@comcast.net)

Much of my career has been in public sector folklore, but all of it has been volunteer work. I served eight years on the Utah Arts Council, four years on the National Folk Arts Panel, and I served on the Western Folklife Center Board of Directors. I've made my living as a professor. I taught as a visiting professor at several universities, but my main positions were at Brigham Young University, Utah State University, and then back again at BYU. At BYU, I served as the English Department chair for six years—I don't recommend that to anyone. But I learned about hiring people into a department.

There are very few straight folklore academic positions in the field, so most potential employers are outside the field. At least in the beginning, most of your activity will be outside the field. Your training needs to be as broad as possible, and should include strong minors in fields outside folklore. As you seek jobs in particular departments, you must learn as much about the emphases in those departments as you can. You need to let them know that you can teach their standard courses—that's what they want you for. Then you must demonstrate how your folklore training can help them reach their departmental goals. Stories are important in sociology, organizational behavior, ethnic studies, etc. Jackie Thursby, whom we hired at BYU, had an M.A. in folklore and a Ph.D. in American Studies. She had also been a high school teacher for many years in secondary English Education, and that's what she was brought into the department to do. She supervises high school teachers, observes them, etc. But she also teaches a lot of folklore. We looked at what she could do with her folklore training in the course for secondary English teachers. Most of the high school texts are pretty bad on folklore. She now helps prepare teachers to teach folklore.

I wish there were a magic formula. I retired in 1996. I've been a has-been for quite a while, though I continue to do some of the things I've always done, I just don't get paid for them.

When I was hired at BYU after getting my Ph.D. at Indiana University the department was growing very rapidly. They needed composition teachers and survey American literature teachers, etc. I taught those things when I started out. But I also began trying to develop the possibility of teaching folklore courses, cultivating a folklore discipline in the university. My wife invented a term—"hallology"—for the practice of moving up and down the halls and talking to people. I did this with people who would talk to me, discovered their interests, tried to relate their interests to mine, volunteered to go into other classes and guest lecture, etc. I cheerfully accepted committee assignments and did what I was asked to do. I was developing friendships. They pay off later. It gave me leeway to develop the folklore program. If you have friends in the department and you try to get a course through, it will get through. I tried to praise and support people for their work, and they acted in kind.

I also tried to develop a presence for folklore that the university could not deny. I went all over the state talking about folklore. There are numerous opportunities to talk to clubs, scholars' groups, and more. I talked to a Mormon writers' conference, a BYU theatre forum, the Utah Humanities Council, local chapters of historical and genealogical societies, centennial lecture series, a conference on marriage patterns, a Forest Service workshop. I had to prepare for some of those, but before long, those things began to pay off. Before long, we got the Introduction to Folklore class, then American Folklore, then a graduate course, then a master's course. And before long, I was doing what I wanted to do, which was to teach folklore. I also worked with the library, and I gave several talks in the library lecture series. Then I was able to work with the library to set up an archive. It was recently named after me, but this came about from making friends of librarians. I also talked to other professors. I went to the anthropology department—the head of that department had gone to the University of Chicago, and I spoke with great reverence about Radcliffe-Brown. He cross-listed my folklore class.

I began attending the meetings of the Utah State Historical Society and wrote an article on folklore and history. My friend was head of the historical society, so we worked out a deal where one session of the historical society meetings was a folklore session. They always put us immediately after lunch, because they figured we could keep people awake.

When I left BYU to go to USU, my own department tried to stop me, and two other people formed a committee to try to keep me, and they were the anthropology chair and a prominent historian. At USU, I took a position in English and History. They let me do what I wanted, including develop an archives and the Fife Folklore Conference.

I just received the Leonard Arrington Award, and one statement in it is, "sensitivity to the close relationship between folklore and history in the study of the Mormon past."

I want to build hope. I started my career teaching no folklore, though I had a Ph.D. in folklore, and I ended my career with two decades of teaching nothing but folklore.

### *Peggy Bulger*

I have been associated with organizations most of my career. I have also been an independent folklorist—the Norwegian Cruise Lines once hired me to find real artists in Jamaica to sell authentic crafts.

If you leave yourself open, your skills will lead you to the job you should have. When you're first getting out of school, you have to be flexible. Either you have to stay in one place and do anything, or travel all over and do one thing. After I got my masters at Western Kentucky, I was hired to work in Berea, Kentucky, and I had a wonderful time. That was 1974. The jobs were scarce then. You have to be aware. I went home and was sending out resumes, trying to find a job. I got a job as an oral historian in Albany for a summer. It was great. It gave me on my resume the fact that I could do oral history.

Luckily, the year before, I'd gone to AFS. You have to go to AFS. This meeting is important. You need to know the people, what projects are out there. I had gone to AFS, and had met Archie Green in New Orleans. He was a wonderful mentor, was interested in what I was doing. I told him I wanted to be a public folklorist. I wanted a state folklorist job—they were brand new. I got a call from Al Head, the head of the Stephen Foster Center in White Springs, FL, and he asked me for a resume. He said we're looking for a folklorist, and Archie Green suggested you. I went down to White Springs, a town of 800 people in the Deep South. It was an eye-opening experience. I thought of it as fieldwork. I spent twelve years there. I met my husband there. It ended up as a state folk arts coordinator position, and I learned a lot about working in state government.

You have to make friends. You need to reach out to people in the other departments, museums, libraries, PBS stations, etc. If you build your cultural network and become indispensable to what other people are doing, you can help them with their projects. You have opportunities to be very creative. You can be a TV or radio producer, a tour manager, an artist advocate, depending on who you network with.

There was an existing festival that gave me the excuse to do fieldwork all over the state. The job kept changing; we ended up with twelve staff members at one point. In an organization like that, it's hard to do your own research, to learn the current issues in the field. In Florida, you could work ten years and then take a sabbatical. I went to the University of Pennsylvania and did the coursework for a Ph.D. It was a real shot in the arm. The faculty thought they were training us for the academy—I treated it like ethnography of the academy. And the theories I learned, I could use in the public sector. I returned to Florida, but felt I needed to move on. And a position opened up—the Southern Arts Federation had a meeting of all southern folk arts coordinators (nine states). The director of SAF had a conversation with Bess Hawes about what a regional organization should be doing in folk arts. The group of folk arts coordinators told them to hire a folklorist. They got an NEA grant, and I got that job. I went from local, to state, to regional. It was great fun—I got to work with all my buddies who were the state folklorists in the South. The networks had been put into place by NEA. When I went to Florida, I was the fourth state folk arts coordinator in the country. When I went to SAF, almost every state had a state folklorist. If you want to work in a particular state, you need to know who the folklorists are there.

I stayed at SAF for ten years. Then the job at the Library of Congress opened up. I didn't even apply for it. I was happy in Atlanta. Alan called me and said I needed to apply—no other women had applied. I ended up getting the job. It scared the heck out of me. I was comfortable with what I was doing. Don't not apply because you think you're not qualified. You don't know what they're looking for. Keep your options open. It's always good to go through the interview process. That was a grueling process.

Over the course of all this, I've learned that your skills rise to the surface. I love fieldwork, but I have not done fieldwork in years, because I've had to do something else to keep the program or organization alive. I've had to be a politician, a manager, a fundraiser, a producer. I've found I like managing other people. I like to hire good people and let them do great projects and have a great diversity of things going on. Some people can't stand that. There are days when I think, "What am I doing here?" There are many ways to be a folklorist. We need folklorists who have skills at all levels. It is crucial to be a manager, and there are people who are born fieldworkers, or born archivists, or whatever. You may not know now what your skills really are, and what your trajectory will be. It will come to the surface. Keep your options open, be willing to move around, be willing to try new things, work in organizations you might not expect. You'll learn what you're good at, and you'll be able to excel.

As you go out to do job interviews, make sure you know about the place. Find out as much as you can. Get into the conversation that you know that the place is working on a particular project, or whatever. The more you know, the better. The other thing is, don't lie. People will lie like a dog, and they'll get to the interview, and you find out they have no experience in the area. Be who you are. Don't lie, but don't be modest, either. Let them know what experience you have that might fit their needs.

### ***Presenting Yourself in the Academic and Public Job Market: Questions and Answers***

**Q: There seems to be a plethora of Ph.D.'s. For those of us that may not have thought about a Ph.D., how important is it in public sector folklore?**

Bulger: It's very important and not so important. I could not have gotten this job without a Ph.D. But in the arts, Ph.D.'s are unusual and are not required. Experience counts more there. At the Library of Congress, you have to have the Ph.D. I didn't think the doctorate was going to do me any good in my job. I just went into it for fun. If someone would pay me to be a student, that would be great. It all depends on what you want to do.

**Q: Should you just apply for tenure track positions, or lecture positions?**

Wilson: It depends on how hungry you are. It is not often that a non-tenure-track position gets turned into a tenure-track position. One reason is that the university has a cap on FTE (full-time equivalents). You can't go beyond that. If you were going to change a non-tenure-track position to a tenure-track position, you'd have to find the FTE somewhere. I'd certainly take a non-tenure-track position if I didn't have other opportunities. It's often a good place from which to apply for other

jobs. You can watch what's happening in the field, you're beginning to publish, you're gaining experience.

**Q: I struggle to balance research, teaching, and publishing. So you suggest emphasizing one or other of those things depending on what you want to do?**

Wilson: If you haven't already, and you want an academic job, you need to gain as much experience as you can: editorial work, published articles, and teaching. All will help in the academy. But you need to know the place you're applying—some fine schools don't stress publishing, they stress teaching.

**Q: How much do teaching and publication affect work in the public sector?**

Bulger: At the Library of Congress, we want a balance. But we really want a team player, someone who is not so invested in their own research that they can't work on other projects. In the public sector, you need to be more of a generalist than an expert on one thing.

Wilson: If you have fieldwork experience, and you apply to an English Department, you'd better be prepared to explain what fieldwork is. It's still research, but not a form that most English professors are familiar with.

Kate Monk: At the British Columbia Folklore Society, they are publishing old student papers. Contact me if you are interested.

Elaine Thatcher: In the public sector, there is no need for a track record of publication. But you must be able to write things like museum copy, exhibit catalogs, and festival brochures, etc.

**Q: I'm looking for a way to explain myself for positions in which I think my folklore background can be useful in non-folklore institutions. What can I tell them my skills are? Interviewing, diversity training?**

Lund: You need to know what they're looking for. You also need to explain what you do, because they may have stereotyped ideas.

Bulger: I agree. People need to emphasize—another reason to dabble in several research areas—the work they've done. Did you do some research on Jewish culture in graduate school? You may qualify for a Hebraic Studies type of job.

## **Finding Funding for Your Work**

### **Presenters:**

**Barry Bergey** (National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, DC)

**Elizabeth Peterson** (Fund for Folk Culture, Santa Fe, New Mexico)

**Robert Sayers** (National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, DC)

### **Main points:**

1. When you pursue funding, first have a good idea and feel passionate about it. Don't ask what the funder funds.
2. Plan many months ahead.
3. Get grantwriting experience by creating a project and applying for funds, even while in school. You may need to find a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.
4. Explore whether your dissertation research is on a topic of interest to a nonprofit for whom you could write a grant and produce a public product.
5. There are several different kinds of foundations:
  - a. Community foundations that focus on benefiting a particular community.
  - b. Family foundations that are started and run by families. They may be very tiny or very large.
  - c. Large private foundations like Ford, Rockefeller, MacArthur, which generally fund nationally or regionally and are very professional and bureaucratic.
6. Use the Internet to prospect for funders. Look at their guidelines, their lists of grantees, to see how you will fit into their interests.
7. Look into alternative sources of funding, like think tanks, research centers, policy centers, and service organizations.
8. At NEH, look at their website and have a conversation with a program officer before applying. This can apply to many other funders as well.

**Robert Sayers**, [rsayers@neh.gov](mailto:rsayers@neh.gov)

I'm a Senior Program Officer at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I have a background in folklore. I was Archie Green's first student back in the 1960s. I also worked with Ralph Rinzler on the second Festival of American Folklife. I was in charge of the Texas Pavilion. The folks at the pavilion just ignored me. So Ralph put me on a bus to North Carolina and Georgia to find potters. It was both the most terrifying and energizing experience of my career. Ralph gave me a suitcase full of tape and a Nagra tape recorder. I had many adventures, found potters, and came back. Ralph and I wrote a monograph on a potter family. I've been at the NEH since, but when the Endowment lost funding in the 1990s, I did some work for Richard Kurin. It all comes back around.

The NEH has five divisions. One of the five divisions is the Education Division, of which I'm a part. We also have the Division of Public Programs, and the Division of Research Programs. Those are the three I'll talk about. In addition, there are the Preservation and Access Program, which helps archives and museums preserve their collections, and the office of Challenge Grants.

We don't have anything for people before they've achieved their professional career. We used to have dissertation grants. We do have fellowships for academics and independents, summer stipends for academic and independent scholars, collaborative research grants, and special grants for historically Black and tribal colleges. The only grants to individuals available at NEH are through these categories.

In Public Programs, we have small and large grants—libraries (for storytelling, poetry readings, etc); museum exhibitions (planning and implementation); television projects (PBS-type documentaries). Ethnographic films are problematic. This program funds full-fledged TV-style documentaries.

In the Education Programs Division, we fund professional development grants at the K-12 and higher education levels or some combination thereof—usually opportunities for teachers to get together with scholars on some subject. In higher education, professional development might be revamping curriculum, or bringing in outside scholars; we also give grants for curriculum development and materials development—lots of web development grants. For example, we funded a history of St. Louis website and a “Valley of the Shadow” website dealing with Civil War.

The website is [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov). I'm available to answer questions, so please call.

### ***Barry Bergey***

I am the Director of Folk & Traditional Arts at the National Endowment for the Arts. I started out not trained as a folklorist—I was in American Literature. I went to the University of Missouri and studied the culture of the region. That led me into programs that related to folklore, and as one who pursued funding for those programs, I was led into the field and ended up working as a bureaucrat.

When I was in Missouri, I got interested in traditional music. Johnny Shine's car broke down in St. Louis, so a group of us decided to do a concert to get him money to repair his car so he could get home to Alabama. So we advertised a concert in St. Louis. A huge audience came. We ended up doing two concerts. It gave us the idea that there was an audience for this kind of music. We formed a nonprofit organization, Missouri Friends of the Folk Arts, and we presented traditional music in the early 1970s. None of us was working in jobs related to this. Then we thought we should make some recordings of Ozark musicians. Alan Jabbour had done a couple of albums, and we thought there were equally good musicians in Missouri.

We had no money, so we tried to figure out how to fund it. We went to the Missouri Arts Council, which kind of laughed. At that time, they didn't think arts councils funded that sort of thing. Then Alan had moved to NEA, overseeing a program called Special Projects. I visited him and he encouraged me to write an application. We weren't smart enough to know we needed to write in money for our time, etc. We just included expenses. We got the grant and went and did it, and produced an album called *I'm Old But I'm Awfully Tough*. So then the state arts agency got interested and gave us money to put the album into libraries around the state. We were a group of people who weren't professionally trained who were passionate about this, and we ran into one bureaucrat who encouraged us. It taught me that if you're in the business of giving out money, you need to be open to anyone walking through the door. We did nine years of festivals and concerts, and I ended up in a



state folk arts coordinator position in Missouri. Then later I ended up in DC at the Endowment, giving away some of the money.

When you pursue funding, first have a good idea and feel passionate about it. I don't want you to ask what we fund, I want you to say what you want to do, and I'll tell you if we'll fund it. There is now a distinct folk arts program at the NEA. Grants are project-related—you come to us with an idea for a something—exhibit, festival, tour, etc. And funds go to nonprofit organizations. You need to have an infrastructural mechanism to get funds through a nonprofit, whether you partner with someone or start your own. Now there's a network of folk arts coordinators around the country. Most state arts agencies have either folklorists on staff or work collaboratively with another organization to provide those services. Many of them have funding programs. It doesn't hurt to start at the state level and then move on to federal support.

Generally, we have two deadlines, one in the spring, one in August. Forms and guidelines are on the NEA website ([www.arts.endow.gov](http://www.arts.endow.gov)). They'll probably be split differently in the future—we're going to return to a discipline focus. There will be a Folk & Traditional Arts page, and our own deadlines. One deadline may be presentational, the other heritage preservation and services to the field (learning, workshops, convenings, and, as much as we can, support for positions). It's a peer panel process, people with cultural expertise who make recommendations on the projects. The timeline is extended—you need to think at least nine months ahead. That's why you should explore other opportunities.

**Betsy Peterson**, [bpeterson@folkculture.org](mailto:bpeterson@folkculture.org)

I'm the Executive Director of the Fund for Folk Culture. I didn't think I would end up there either. I got a Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1990, but actually started graduate school in 1977. I took lots of crummy-paying jobs, traveled all over the country, went to Texas Folklife Resources, then to the New England Foundation for the Arts, which got me into private philanthropy a bit. I began doing research for foundations—Ford, Wallace. That's another kind of consulting you can do. I wrote a publication called *The Changing Faces of Tradition* for NEA. Then I ended up at FFC.

When I was in graduate school, by the time I was ABD (all but dissertation), I had gotten two grants already. After I ran out of assistantship money, I wondered how to continue my research, how to finance my fieldwork for my dissertation. I used two strategies (you need to be creative): The first grant proposal I wrote and the first we received, was with a fellow student, Elaine Lawless, who was working with Pentecostals. We wanted to do a documentary. But with the help of the Folklore Institute, we got a grant from the Indiana Endowment for the Humanities. It financed a year of research. It paid my rent for 18 months, and paid it better than an assistantship, and enabled extensive fieldwork. When it came time to do my dissertation fieldwork, I had been doing fieldwork in Tennessee with a musician, marble worker, a jack of all trades. There's more dissertation money internationally than in the US. I decided to write a grant to NEA to finance my fieldwork, but knowing I would have to produce a public product. NEA does not fund dissertation work—it has to have a product. I worked through a fiscal sponsor—the Tennessee Folklore Society, got the funding, and was able to spend four to five months in Tennessee doing documentation that is now in the Tennessee State Library. I did a recording and a monograph. It got my work done. Be creative—if

you know what you want to do, and have a good idea, there are ways to couch the work so that it fits funders' guidelines.

The Fund for Folk Culture was started in 1991 as a public foundation, founded by a number of people including Archie Green. It was a group that felt that private funding was not a hospitable place for folk arts and traditional culture. There needed to be an entity that could develop private funding programs but also serve as a voice of advocacy within private philanthropy for folklore. We've had funding programs off and on. We go to foundations to ask for large sums of money that we then re-grant in smaller amounts to small organizations that large foundations can't get to. We are an intermediary. A similar organization is Meet the Composer for contemporary composers in the US. Our funding changes over time because we don't have an endowment. We have to fundraise. As a result, the programs we offer change over time and are time limited. Right now, we don't have any funding programs for which you all could apply unless you live in California. We fund the kinds of organizations that folklorists work with—grass roots cultural organizations like the California Indian Basketweavers Association, the Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance, museums, some state arts agencies, historical societies, and fiscal sponsor relationships.

You need to know about the different kinds of private foundations, how to prospect them and look for funding possibilities. Foundations are all over the map in terms of style, programs, and processes. Most private foundations don't have a formal application process. With many foundations, you have to approach them directly, develop a relationship with a program officer, and develop an idea with them. There are three or four different kinds of foundations:

- Community foundations. There are thousands of them, and they are the fastest growing type. Often they are situated in cities. Most large urban areas have them, and many smaller towns; some states have them. They have funds that are for projects that benefit that community. They often also have targeted funds—"donor-advised funds," where someone wants to start their own fund, and they have the community foundation administer it.
- Family foundations. These are run and started by families. Family members serve on the board and make decisions about where the money goes. The Ford Foundation started out that way, but is no longer that way. Family foundations run the gamut from being quite large and bureaucratic (James Irvine), to one person and not even an office.
- Large private foundations. Examples are Ford, Rockefeller, MacArthur, and Annenberg. Generally they fund nationally or regionally, and they are very bureaucratic, very professional. They administer large sums of money. They can be very difficult to reach. Some will not entertain unsolicited requests. Others have open processes. You need to go to their websites (though smaller ones may not have websites). Most funding to folklore comes from smaller private foundations, and they fund locally. You must do your homework. Call your community foundation. They'll talk to you, tell you information about their programs or others they're aware of.

Prospecting: The Internet has made a big difference here. You have quicker access to information, but not much help in where to go to get it. The Council on Foundations website ([www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org)) is one place to go. They have a section on grantwriting tips, how to approach foundations. Another website is the Foundation Center (<http://fdncenter.org>). They have offices around the country.

They have “blue book” directories that contain indices, lists, information on which foundations fund what. Another resource is the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ([www.chronicle.com](http://www.chronicle.com)), and the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* ([www.philanthropy.com](http://www.philanthropy.com)). University libraries may have these. The *Chronicle of Philanthropy* helps you understand who is funding what, what the issues are, the trends.

Another place to look is accessible by clicking on “Networking” on the Council on Foundations website. Here you’ll find affinity groups of funders. Foundations who belong to the Council have split up into about thirty interest groups. Grantmakers in the Arts is one of those affinity groups. There’s lots of potential for funding, and you can narrow your search quickly. Most of the affinity groups have websites. Grantmakers for Immigrants and Refugees have an excellent website. Foundations who don’t want lots of requests are not listed. Often you’ll find combinations of individual, research, organizational, and project granting. Most will not say, “We fund folklore.” You need to approach them through a different lens. Do some research on what they have funded in the past to see if their interests might fit what you are doing.

Check out think tanks, research centers, and policy centers like the Aspen Institute, the Urban Institute, the Woodrow Wilson Center, etc. Some of them offer dissertation fellowship funding, post-doctoral fellowships, paid internships, and so forth. They may be oriented toward policy-type work, but if that is your interest, check them out.

Service organizations: The Trust for Mutual Understanding, the Institute for International Education (a Fulbright Program), the Social Science Research Council, and others offer funding opportunities. Most of these are mentioned in the resource manual on the AFS website.

When you look at foundations, since they are so individual, one of the ways you can tell if you’re going to have a shot at them, is to look at who they fund—their grantee list. That will give you one of the best indications of whether you really have a shot.

### ***Finding Funding for Your Work: Questions and Answers***

#### **Q: Is personal contact recommended, or do they find it annoying?**

Peterson: It depends. Check their website on how they want to be approached. Some will respond to a letter or phone call, and some won’t.

Sayers: NEH has two rules: 1, look at the website, and 2, call and have a long conversation with a program officer about what you want to do, at least two months ahead of the deadline.

Bergey: In Folk & Traditional Arts, we have two staff people. But we are happy to respond to emails. It really helps if you have at least looked at our website so you know what we fund. Also, some advice about when you approach private funders—in Missouri, we made an appointment with a local corporation to ask for funds. I ran into someone who asked who we were going to talk to, and when I told her, she said, “The answer is no. She’s paid to say no.” You really need that personal connection, because cold contacts may always get a no.

Peterson: You may have better luck with small, local foundations and community foundations. Also, state and federal agencies are public servants, so they are supposed to be available to you, and they are.

**Q: How important is the track record of the applicant institution?**

Bergey: At NEA, there's a great debate about that. Our current guidelines say you must have a three-year track record. But how you answer the questions about capacity will really be the determining factor.

Sayers: Track record is not important at NEH. We're interested in first-timers. The key is to talk to a program officer. If you're not funded, we'll happily send the reviewer comments.

**Q: I wonder if I should start my own nonprofit. Should I do that?**

Lisa Higgins: the Missouri Arts Council has a category for new applicants. It's a shorter turnaround, easier application.

Sayers: Sometimes we'll tell you that you should contact your state humanities council first, because they offer smaller, more localized grants. Sometimes the indirect costs rate is much lower if you do it through a nonprofit than a university.

Peterson: Ask yourself if you are going to continue on that path (in your own nonprofit). I probably would not recommend doing it, because for one thing, it costs money to do, and if you make more than \$25,000, you have to pay the taxes. You might be better in that instance in finding another nonprofit that will be an umbrella for you.

## Communicating to Diverse Audiences

Presentations by folklorists working in the fields of academic journals, university presses, creative writing programs, journalism, and the media.

### **Presenters:**

**Hal Cannon** (Western Folklife Center, Salt Lake City, Utah)

**Norma Cantú** (University of Texas, San Antonio)

**Russell Frank** (School of Journalism, Pennsylvania State University, University Park)

**Elaine J. Lawless** (University of Missouri, Columbia; Editor, *Journal of American Folklore*)

**Judy McCulloh** (University of Illinois Press, Champaign-Urbana)

### **Main points:**

#### *General*

1. Don't be afraid to ask senior members of the profession for help. They have benefited from similar help, and they want to see folklore continue and grow.

#### *The Media, community service work and journalism*

1. Working in radio and similar media can teach you how to tell a story.
2. You can gather folkloric information in many settings, including service settings like literacy classes.
3. You can share information through writing, staying in touch with the communities you work with, doing public humanities programs.
4. Folklorists can bring new approaches to journalism: depth of understanding about communities, a storytelling approach.
5. For media like newspapers and radio, you need to learn to tell your story succinctly. You may need to work with a good producer/editor.
6. Creative nonfiction classes are good for learning how to write well.

#### *Publishing*

1. To get published, do your homework on the journals you are considering. What are their interests? Who is on the board? Who is the editor? What are their disciplines?
2. The way to get published is to write a good paper.
3. Send a clean, neat paper with no mistakes in it; get someone to proof it before you send it in; get your citations right the first time, in accordance with the appropriate journal's form.
4. Don't ever say that you are a graduate student or that the paper/book is from your dissertation.
5. Once your paper or book is accepted by a press, be prepared for a lot of work.
6. If your article is rejected, move on: revise, and submit again.
7. Books, unlike journal articles, need to read like journalism. They need to be free of the telltale signs of a discipline and its jargon.
8. Read the work of some of folklore's most inspired writers; e.g., William A. Wilson, Barre Toelken, Sandy Ives.

**Hal Cannon**, [halc@westernfolklife.org](mailto:halc@westernfolklife.org)

Even though I'm in mass media these days, talking to five million people on the radio, I still believe in the intimate, the things that are really the stuff of folklore as we progress in our work. When I was twenty-five to thirty-five years old, it was the one-on-one generosity of people like Bert Wilson, Barre Toelken, Alan Jabbour, and others that really nurtured me into my career. Recently I was asked to make nominations for an important award in America, and to nominate people in my field who were in their twenties and thirties, and I realized I didn't know anyone that age, nor their work. It was a wake up call for me. I'd become of the generation that was making the nominations. I was in the nurturing generation instead of the nurtured generation. Since then I've made a point of working with younger people, trying to hire younger people. I'm open to young people who want to do radio. I talk to them, they can call me on the phone. A lot of us who aren't faculty members really do want to help and share. We've benefited from that ourselves. Don't be afraid to ask people for help. We want to see folklore continue and grow.

In my career, I've been fortunate to try a lot of things. When I got my first job as a state folk arts coordinator, I had the chance to be an exhibit designer, journalist, video/ audio producer, scholar and more. The most challenging role was being a cultural mediator. That's why I've chosen to focus on producing radio and television. Lately, in radio, I've been giving lots of workshops on the interview process. I'm going to a meeting next week—the Third Coast Audio Festival. It's a bunch of young people who are passionate about radio and its power. The beauty of radio is it's low-tech. You can get free software for editing audio. Minidisk recorders and microphones are of incredible quality. So with just some skills and desire you can produce. Of course, getting it on the radio is harder.

I've never been an independent folklorist—just an independently-minded folklorist in institutions. I am independently motivated. In media, you either work for a station or network, or you're an independent. There's nothing in between. There's a bunch of independent producers out there. They're expected to have incredible mobility, to be able to answer yes or no to almost anything when they're doing an edit with a radio station. My partner Taki and I work as independent radio producers, doing features on the culture of the West—our pieces appear mostly on *Weekend Edition Sunday* and *Marketplace*.

One thing I've learned in radio that I didn't learn in folklore is how to tell a story. When you interview someone, you're profiling someone. In radio, you're telling a story—there's a time element to it. Scott Carrier told me that the most important question in radio is "What's happening?" I never would have thought of that. You want to get the story as it's unfolding—get people in the middle of something. Folklorists could learn something from that—capture people as events unfold in their lives. Folklorists can teach radio people the value of raw tape. Radio people throw away their tapes. I go to Third Coast and preach the value of archives. Tape is cheap. The raw tape is more important than our current-day interpretation. We've got a lot to give the media. They are interested in what we do as folklorists—our depth of knowledge, our interest in diversity. I've been working with PBS for a couple of years trying to get a documentary on TV. The biggest challenge is the bureaucracy.

Lately one of the most challenging cultural mediation projects I've worked on is a safety film we're doing on the Navajo Reservation, in three languages. Folklore has been the thing that has helped me make this situation work.

***Norma Cantú***, [NCANTU@utsa.edu](mailto:NCANTU@utsa.edu)

I am a Professor of English at the University of Texas at San Antonio. I sneak folklore in wherever I can. Gathering and sharing information are my main areas. Gathering in the academy is different than what we do as folklorists. We don't gather information in the library—we go out and talk to people. The academy often doesn't value the talking as much as the reading. I tell students we can make the talking as important as the reading. Oral history is a bridge from the community to the academy. As for sharing, the personal narrative is not as valued in the academy as in folklore. That's not how I write or teach. Once I made full professor and my work was being read, even if I used "I," then it got easier.

Gathering: one of my projects is to look at Latino/a culture in other parts of the country—Idaho, Tennessee. I started in Laredo with a literacy program using my students. We started collecting stories that we used in the literacy classes. That documentation allows me to be a bridge, and I give the stories back to the communities. It takes time—that's a challenge.

Sharing: It is hard to share with the communities because I'm now living in San Antonio, not Laredo. The literacy work was more direct and immediate. My writing is now another level of sharing. Another project for bridging is participating in public humanities programs. I'm on the Texas Council for the Humanities. Lots of folklorists don't bother applying to humanities councils. But I find that if I'm persistent, the grants come through. I recently did a library program where we would read something and then gather stories from people in the reading group. This is a form of fieldwork, and traditional arts came out of people's stories. For example, I found lots of people who know how to make old-time candies from that.

The first Anglo I interviewed was about five years ago. I made a mistake. In my community, I don't take a camera or recorder or video on the first visit. But this guy was my dad's boss at the smelter. There was this class stuff going on; he asked me what I was doing teaching at the university. I didn't tape anything. He died two months later. But because of my visit to him, he returned to Laredo and had a reunion with the men who used to work for him. He never would have thought of doing that if I hadn't gone there. Class, gender, and ethnicity can all be factors. It was awkward in a one-on-one with him.

I've been working with matachines for twenty-seven years. It took about twenty years to be included and be a member of that community. It's almost like second family. I go to their weddings and quinceañeras, parties, etc. That's important, to keep those lines of communication open. Once we engage in a community, we need to stay in touch. Making a video with them was a big thing.

***Russell Frank***

I teach journalism at Pennsylvania State University. I like to tell my students that I never took a journalism class or worked on a school paper. At age thirty, I was working on my dissertation in California, and I needed a job. Someone said the local newspaper needed help. I went and the



publisher said I got the highest score on their editing test. Six months later, they hired me. I loved it. I had always had a hierarchical view—journalism was bird-cage liner. Academe was the highest thing. My skills as a folklorist had great application to being a reporter. I was so struck by the eloquence of the people I talked to that I felt that all I needed to do was present them, not explain them. All I needed to do was write engagingly about them. I was a reporter for many years, and I gave up on being an academic, though in the late '80s and early '90s, I was a free-lance folklorist, on the Italian-Americans in the West and other contract projects, teaching one folklore course a year at Davis, writing for a newspaper, etc. It was great—varied, not boring, and I was making enough for it to work. But each job is kind of a dead end. The economy began to slow down, the work seemed to be drying up. My third child was born, my wife was also freelancing, and we decided we needed a real job with benefits.

My resume didn't look very strong in any one thing. I thought I had a better chance of getting a job as a reporter than a professor. I got a job on a small paper in Pennsylvania. They said I could write a weekly column. I also noticed that the newspaper was in a university town. After being there for a year, I started teaching an adjunct journalism class at Penn State. I finally asked if they would be interested in me full-time. The door opened, and I was hired. The other journalism faculty members were raising their eyebrows—why are we hiring a folklorist? So now I'm teaching journalism classes, trying to bridge a gap between journalism and folklore. There is folklore in the news, but I'm interested in the news in folklore, how people respond to the news, and also the news as folklore. Journalism is a form of storytelling. I'm interested in the ways news stories are folk narratives. A lot of people think they don't want to be journalists—they want to be writers, poets, professors. Journalism is a way of drawing a weekly salary as a writer. It's not a bad thing to do as a folklorist—to meet people and write about them.

On the subject of getting journalists' attention: I was a features editor for a while. I made a list of some of the ways people tried to get my attention: they sent gifts like Grateful Dead-licensed merchandise, including a bottle of Dead Red non-alcoholic wine and a necktie designed by Jerry Garcia, a necktie designed by Frank Sinatra, a box of breathe-right strips, an entire supermarket display case filled with Snackwells cookies, jars of jerk sauce for Jamaican-style barbecued chicken, cakes from local caterers, a box of Dunkin Donuts on the occasion of the first anniversary of their local store, a shopping bag full of bagels and breads from Panera when they opened their local store, and a chair massage from a local masseuse. We ate the food gifts, and gave away the other stuff. I didn't assign a reporter to write about any of those things. There are journalism ethics—editors don't take bribes. Don't bother. But that's what you're up against. I don't remember press releases, I do remember the bribes. I did give coverage to people who sent press releases. But most get tossed in the trash. You need to write a really compelling press release. I take programs from old folklore meetings and take the jazziest titles, and those are the things journalists look into. The usual stuff is "MEGO"—"my eyes glaze over." But you need to think about what gets journalists' attention.

**Elaine Lawless**, [jaf@missouri.edu](mailto:jaf@missouri.edu)

*(Ed. Note: This is the paper that Dr. Lawless read, not a summary of her remarks.)*

These comments will be about publishing in general; others will be specific to the *Journal of American Folklore* (JAF).



Do your homework. Actually go to a library and read several articles in recent issues of the journal you are considering for your article. Read carefully any information about what, specifically, each journal states it is seeking in terms of submitted articles. Then, write for that journal. Do not assume your article is likely to find a happy home in a wide range of different journals. Most journals are quite specific about what they want to publish; be sure you know what that is. Based on the angle you have taken, the scholars you have cited, the theories you are applying, you need to carefully submit your article to the appropriate journal.

If you find journals that claim to be “interdisciplinary” do not assume folklore will be welcomed or understood as an “interdisciplinary” discipline. Do not assume that journals with the words “cultural studies” in the title will think of what folklorists do as “cultural studies.” Some of these may, in fact, want articles that are concerned with “high theory.”

Read the editorial page like a sleuth. Who is on the editorial board (or advisory board—usually a list of distinguished scholars in the field); in what departments, disciplines, or organizations do they work? Who is the Editor? What department is s/he in? Where? What University or press publishes the journal? [Note: some journals use their editorial board to review articles, some do not.]

Once you’ve chosen a journal, print or Xerox their “Information for Contributors” and format your article exactly as directed.

Send the original and the designated number of copies. Make sure these are neat, clean copies, double-spaced, usually including endnotes and bibliography. Most journals require that the COPIES (used for external review) NOT identify the author(s) anywhere in the body of the article, including endnotes and bibliography. Use spell check. Get a colleague or friend to proofread your article for those errors you are likely to miss. The original may include all of this material; it will not be used for external review.

Many journals will ask that you NOT send an article with embedded endnotes. Put superscript numbers “manually” in the text of the article and type the endnotes at the end of the article with regular numbers, not superscripts. Look at recent issues to determine if they use footnotes or endnotes. Also use recent issues for bibliographic style. Even if the journal uses Chicago Manual of Style, for example, or MLA style, the journal may have a modified bibliography style that will be evident in the bibliography and the notes.

Send the original and the specified number of anonymous copies by regular mail to the Editor along with a letter on letterhead if you have some. Make sure you keep a copy of the articles exactly as you sent it to the journal and a copy of the letter you include in the submission packet. The date on this letter becomes very important both to you and to the journal as you both work toward a “timely review” of the article and move toward publication. Certainly, after two to three months, if you have heard nothing from the journal editor, it is perfectly appropriate for you to contact the journal and ask where your article is in the review process. But be certain you can tell them the exact date of your submission and the title of the article.

For your letter, include only a short note that is quite brief—something like:

Date (very important)

Dear -----:

Enclosed please find my article entitled “Full Name of your article here,” which I am submitting to Name of Journal for consideration for publication. This paper is not currently under review by any other journal and it does represent my (our) own scholarly work.

Sincerely,

Your full name

Your business address or the address you wish the journal to use when corresponding  
with you

Your phone numbers

Your email address

Your fax number, if you have one

Also, if you are aware that you will be out of town or out of the country and will not be available during the next nine months or so, indicate that as well.

Be prepared to wait patiently. Journals that have adequate staff will keep in close contact with you. They should acknowledge receipt of your article, let you know if your article will be sent out for external review, and attempt to get two external reviews back to you in a “timely fashion.” A “timely fashion” may mean two to nine months, realistically, depending upon how many reviewers say no to the request to review, how many review the article quickly, how many are in the country, etc. You may check with the journal after a reasonable amount of time to check on the status of your article.

Even after your article is accepted, be prepared to answer many author queries from the journal staff, as well as checking the copyedited article very carefully and then proofing the page proofs. This work can take months, is tedious in its attention to detail, and is absolutely necessary to get your article ready for publication. Obviously, the better your initial manuscript is, the less work it will require in the publication stages.

Do not let rejections depress you. Let rejection help you write a better paper. You HAVE to keep going. Don't let it get you down. Do not put rejected papers into a deep bottom drawer and forget about them. Do NOT take reviewers' comments personally. Do not get angry about reviewers' comments. Learn how to read the comments/critiques very carefully. Decide which comments you think merit your concern and revision; ignore comments that would make the paper something other than it is or seem to be totally off-track. Remember that you can respond to reviewers. Do not lose much time in revising articles based on the critiques and sending them back out to new journals (do your homework, remember!).

At *JAF*, we are interested in all aspects of the field of folklore—including all the genres of the field and all the various approaches, including material culture and public sector/applied folklore issues. *JAF* also welcomes “Notes” and “Dialogue” pieces. Notes are generally shorter than articles and usually are more descriptive—about a festival perhaps or the re-emergence of a tale type long thought to be moribund—information that would be of interest to our folklore readers. “Dialogue” pieces are also generally shorter than articles and often respond to or take issue with articles in previous journal issues.

For articles, we seek well-written papers that (generally) are based on original field research or that are theoretical in terms of the field of folkloristics (and its obvious neighbors—critical theory, literary theory and analysis, anthropology, linguistics, etc.). If the article is based on field research, we require clear information about the details of the field research and expect the scholar to support her/his arguments with quotes from the participants in the study. Furthermore, we expect articles to include but go beyond description and engage the material on theoretical and/or analytical grounds—in ways that further our understanding not only of the genres under consideration but of folklore as a field, a discipline, a content and the context of study. We also welcome historically based articles but also expect these to engage in contemporary concerns of the field of folkloristics, relating the history to the current state of affairs in the field.

We prefer that scholars refer to the participants in field research as participants or consultants rather than several other references such as subjects, informants, etc. We require authors to avoid gender-biased language, unless, of course, the subject under consideration is itself gendered.

For all matters of content, style, format, etc., it is best to read several recent issues of *JAF* to get a sense of the kinds of articles that have been accepted and published. Certainly, questions about the appropriateness of articles can be directed to the *JAF* staff at [jaf@missouri.edu](mailto:jaf@missouri.edu) or the General Editor, Elaine J. Lawless, at [Lawlesse@missouri.edu](mailto:Lawlesse@missouri.edu). Our offices are at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Currently, the staff, in addition to Elaine Lawless, includes Luanne Roth, Managing Editor, Lisa Rathje-Taylor as Associate Editor, and Shelley Ingram as Assistant Editor. Please check the inside front cover of the journal for information about all the other editors, including the Book Review Editor, Exhibits Editor, Sound Recording Editor, and Film Editor. You may contact these editors directly if you have questions about submitting reviews.

### ***Judy McCulloh***

There are days when I think I finally know my job. I’m an acquisitions editor. Publishing is a business. Someone creates a product, somebody works and refines it, and somebody sells it. I’m at the front end—I find the projects that might make good books. I do the folklore list, the American music list, the ethnomusicology list, the Appalachian studies list, and I did the Jewish and Holocaust list, though we are getting out of that.

In the 1970s, I got my folklore degree at Indiana University and thought I would teach. At the University of Illinois Press, the director decided there was room for more work on American music and started a series called *Music in American Life*. Archie Green’s book *Only a Miner* was the first book in the series. My husband was teaching, and Archie arranged for me to work at the Press. They

asked me to develop books in folklore and music. I started copyediting part time, and then went full time. Soon after that, I went to the folklore meetings, and colleagues said, “It’s too bad you couldn’t get a real job.” Ten years later, they would sidle up and ask, “How did you get that great job?” The job market had changed. It’s a great job, and a world we should infiltrate more than we have. There’s lots of work, lots of routine, lots of arguing for the projects you want to do. But it’s far more gratifying than frustrating. A publisher might do two books a year or four books a year, but after ten years, you have a critical mass, and the list has a look.

The economics of publishing books influences the style. With a journal, there’s a steady base of subscribers, they take what comes; they don’t choose one article at a time. With a book, purchasers choose their topics, buying one book at a time. When a book reads more like journalism than scholarship, that’s a good thing. You want a book to be as free of the telltale signs of the discipline as possible—it has to have interdisciplinary appeal for the general reader. Look at how people write for *The New Yorker*. That’s a good model. The best books are written for the world—in 1988 I wrote an article for *JAF* (“Writing for the World,” *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 101, No. 401. (Jul. - Sep., 1988), pp. 293-301) that dealt with that. One way the discipline will survive is by looking outward instead of inward. We can’t use the term “folkloristics.” I see that and I think, “This will be trouble.” You can use your insights from the discipline, but don’t use in-group jargon. Write for the Rotary. We do well if we sell 3,000 copies of a book. And now, with the publishing industry in the doldrums, we have to be a lot more selective. Now we will be more likely to choose a book of broad significance, not a revised dissertation. NEVER say it was a master’s thesis or dissertation. We at least need a cover letter that will say how the book version will be different from the dissertation form.

### ***Communicating to Diverse Audiences: Questions and Answers***

#### **Q: What is the difference between journalism and folklife documentation?**

Frank: When it comes to photos, I don’t know what that difference would be.

Cannon: I’ve thought about that a lot. We’re a folklife center, but we’re out making radio. The way we do an interview and the way journalists do, we don’t turn the recorder off as quickly, and we go into a lot more detail, ask a lot more questions. We keep photographing, interviewing. We do two to three times as much as a lot of journalists would do. From that we cull out the story. Journalists are under deadline, we are less so.

Frank: There’s a thing called “parachute journalism.” You jump in and then write. But in a way, all journalism is parachute journalism. The watchword in journalism is, if it’s done, it’s good. You’re on deadline. Journalists don’t have time for the complexities. The journalist’s voice dominates. Pieces reinforce the message we’re trying to get across. The other watchword is, “When in doubt leave it out.”

Maida Owens: The way pauses and silences are used is different between the two professions. A journalist I knew said he used pauses to make people uncomfortable, to get them to say what they wouldn’t otherwise. I use pauses for allowing people to think.

**Q: Do reporters do investigative work now?**

Frank: There's less and less, because of the financial pressures on journalists. Investigative work takes a lot of time. You need to feed the beast—send a reporter out at ten, and have a story by six. Big papers do investigative work, small ones really don't.

**Q: I'm working on a twelve-part radio series, and am realizing the need for a good editor. The editor I'm working with is letting me put in too much, and the pieces aren't good. I get bored listening.**

Cannon: That's why I hired a very good producer to work with me. We also have an editor. I fall in love with the material too easily. Then I play it back and think, "That's not going to work, but I don't want to take it out either!"

McCulloh: Writing short is very difficult. When you ask people to summarize their book in a paragraph, people scream, but we may even have to describe it only in a sentence. It's a good exercise to think small.

Frank: Journalism is good training for writing shorter pieces.

Lawless: We are now hiring creative nonfiction writers, and I have them come to folklore classes. Creative nonfiction is an avenue to teach us how to write that way.

Frank: A journalist named Ken Fuson did an in-depth story on a high school production of *West Side Story*. He attended auditions, went home with the kids, etc. It ran in the *Baltimore Sun*, and readers were so taken with it that they reprinted it as a special section and sold thousands of copies.

McCulloh: There are some inspired folklore writers—Bert Wilson, Barre Toelken, Sandy Ives—who write very well. Read their work.

Comment: A way to approach editing is to see how it flows when you are presenting it orally.

**Cantú, Q:** I get calls from journalists all over the country for various holidays or celebrations. They want the info now, they won't read an article. How do I handle that?

Cannon: I get lots of calls from journalists and scholars. You can tell pretty quickly how serious they are.

Frank: There seems to be less confidence that reporters are going to get it right. They use the least meaningful thing you said. But it usually means people are sorry they said it.

Tim Lloyd: AFS has established a media committee. Russell is on it. They are dealing with things we can do to effectively work with the media.

Comment: I'm still sort of ticked off that no one talks about this stuff in graduate schools. It needs to be part of our core graduate school experience.

**Betsy Peterson, Q:** Indiana University is establishing a position in cultural policy and intellectual property. But in graduate school, is there any emphasis on learning to write?

Lawless: At Missouri, our students are encouraged to write.

McCulloh: This generation of academic advisors has not come around to understand that writing has to be for a broader audience.

Frank: You use the word “accessible,” and they hear “dumbing it down.”

Cannon: We’ll pitch stories, and they’ll say, “Well from any other independent reporter, I wouldn’t consider it, but I know you’ll put an interesting spin on it.” Folklorists have the ability to bring depth and make things compelling.

## **Finding and Creating New Opportunities for Folklorists**

Presentations by folklorists working across the professional landscape, in education, health care, public policy, and other fields.

### **Presenters:**

**Paddy Bowman** (National Network for Folk Arts in Education, Alexandria, Virginia)

**Inta Carpenter** (Folklore Institute, Indiana University, Bloomington)

**Joyce Ice** (Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico)

**Mary Anne McDonald** (Duke University Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina)

**Molly Singer** (International City/ County Management Association, Washington, DC)

**Amy Skillman** (Institute for Cultural Partnerships, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania)

### **Main points:**

#### *General*

1. The book *Composing a Life* is an excellent resource.

#### *Education*

1. If you have any interest in working with teachers and librarians, look at their websites, and attend their meetings.
2. You cannot lecture teachers. They learn by doing.

#### *Applied folklore*

1. If you are interested in activism and applied folklore, consider whether a Ph.D. is necessary.
2. You can use your academic folklore training, with its problem-solving skills, to work within your community in any role you wish.
3. In the course of project planning, clarifying roles, articulating expectations, taking personal accountability, interviewing, and struggling with equipment, you will come face to face with adjectives often bandied about by aspiring activists: collaborative, democratic, participatory, experiential, engaged, non-hierarchical, and need-oriented.
4. Folklore methodology can serve you well if you wish to enter the public health field. Fieldwork can be a part of the work, though you have to create your own niche, sell people on what folklore can do for the work, and learn the language and goals of the profession.
5. You can leverage cultural resources with economic and political resources if you wish to work in some aspect of public administration and government. Folklore training can help local governments plan inclusive and successful processes in land planning, civic communication, and more.
6. In many of these less-common applications of folklore work, folklore is the means, not the end.
7. To work in government, you should be willing to learn about public finance, urban planning, how a bill becomes a law, etc.

8. Folklore training can be useful in refugee resettlement work, diversity training, community-based methods for public health workers, and conflict management training. Ethnographic methods can be used in all of these areas.
9. Follow your interests and your heart. We have a range of skills such as listening, which might help in such work as mediation.
10. Look at trends in our society to find opportunities where your folklore training might be useful. Aging in place is one right now.

### *Museums*

1. Museum work is a profession which combines public programming, field and library research, and analysis of the relationships between culture and works of art. The museum community grapples with questions of authority, power, and control when presenting traditional art and its relationship to the established art world. Academic training and public programming experience both help prepare museum professionals.
2. There are three main areas in museum work:
  - a. Curation, which requires a content specialization related to art and material culture, and which requires ongoing research and writing.
  - b. Education, which focuses on public programming, lifelong learning, and support for teachers.
  - c. Administration, which requires basic financial, public relations, and fundraising skills. Administrators have little time for their own research and writing and must be problem-solvers and be willing to take satisfaction in other people's accomplishments.
3. To prepare for museum work, check out the websites, attend meetings, and start in your own community museum.

### ***Paddy Bowman***

I got my folklore degree in 1982. I didn't get a job in folklore until 1993. My daughter got a job in a school and I started helping her in the classroom. She gave me the chance to work with teachers and folklorists. You cannot lecture teachers. The snores are instant. Teachers learn by doing.

Teachers don't know that they have folklore. First it's a journey of self-discovery, then you get them into content. I learn activities from teachers that help me deliver theory and content of folklore without lecturing. If you have any interest in working with teachers and librarians, look at the websites, find their meetings, and go. Despite President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program, there is good stuff happening everywhere. There's teacher training, there's working directly with kids as a folklorist in residence. The perspective of a folklorist is so important to anyone who is putting on an exhibit. There are lots of different levels. The crying need is for folklorists to be teaching in schools of education. It's not happening.

I ask classes of teachers to make something out of paper (hats, boats, cootie catchers, airplanes). After people have made their paper objects, I ask them, "Who taught you to make this?" I ask the teachers, "What did you learn outside school?" They get excited. If you are interested in pursuing folklore and education, don't reinvent the wheel—join the Education Section of AFS and get involved.



**Ina Carpenter**, [carpente@indiana.edu](mailto:carpente@indiana.edu)

(Ed. Note: This is the paper that Dr. Carpenter read, not a summary of her remarks.)

I want to start with some ancient, but pertinent, personal history. I entered a Masters' program in the Department of Folklore at Indiana University because I wanted to return to a career in social work equipped with an understanding of the range of human traditional expressions and behaviors. I had worked in the Child Welfare Department, as it was then called, in Pueblo, Colorado, with Mexican and African American families. I was young—twenty-two—myself childless, from a Northern European background, raised in suburban Indianapolis. I needed some education in cultural difference. I never returned to social work.

For the past twenty-five-some years, I have worked in the Folklore Department at Indiana University in a unit called Special Projects, which focuses on research projects, conferences, publications, and outreach activities. I now think of a return to social service as that second career in retirement.

If I entered IU in the early 1970s expecting an applied degree that would allow me to put folklore to use, what I discovered was that IU's program was geared toward credentializing Ph.D.s. As soon I finished my M.A., my mentors urged me to complete a Ph.D., which I did, though I have never aspired to being a teaching professor. (I am currently a "research professor," under the rather liminal official title of Research Scholar). Nevertheless, the Ph.D. stood me in good stead—providing "authority" of a sort in my interactions with others and in my applications for fellowships and grants to fund my research on exile identity formation.

In seeking an applied degree, I was in good company, for numbers of our students enter the program wanting to work in museums, with media, in education, in social service. When they grasp that the M.A. won't be of much help, too many of them ease into a Ph.D. program whose curriculum and ideology prove maladaptive for aspiring activists. For me, this marginalizing of the interests of the more activist-oriented students has been a frustrating process to witness. Certainly it was part of what motivated me to hold onto the vision that the departmental curriculum could incorporate and be enriched by an applied option. Most recently, hanging onto this vision has taken me into the classroom as well.

Early on in my career at IU, I got involved in applied projects, informally and as simply a matter of personal interest. But it wasn't until the mid -1990s, with the arrival of two back-to-back, large cohorts (some twenty-plus in each year) of activist-oriented folklore graduate students, that collaboration on a larger scale became possible. First, six graduate students asked to do a summer practicum with me with Bloomington's senior center. Then a particularly dedicated student spearheaded a discussion group about applied folklore and activist methodologies. For two years, about twelve of us—faculty, students, and alums—met in the home of a faculty colleague every other Sunday.

At first, we read books and articles, on action research as a means for revitalizing sociology, on "The Anthropology of Trouble" (Roy Rapoport, in *American Anthropologist* 95 (1993): 295-303) as a topic in anthropology. Robert Bellah (*Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, New

York: Harper and Row, 1985) got us thinking about the costs of exchanging general citizenship for membership in the academic “community of the competent.” Frederick Barth (Brooks, Peter, “How Others See Us: An Interview with Frederick Barth,” *Anthropology Newsletter* (February 1997): 60) exhorted us to train students to develop and deploy anthropological concepts and methods in the public sphere. We indulged in a bit of university bashing as we read David Damrosch (*We Scholars: Changing the Culture of the University*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995) on academic culture with its predilection for “lone scholars.” We took part in campus service-learning discussions. We considered ways to expand an academic curriculum that left some students feeling inadequately trained and asking “So what?” “For what?”

Somewhere in that first year, our group named itself the “activist pedagogy group,” a term that inspired us without initially causing undue worry about definition. The term came from an education professor who directed experiential learning classes in Utah. We subsequently invited him to campus for a guest lecture, figuring he would provide a definition for our name. But he merely chuckled, saying that he paired the word “activist” with “pedagogy” simply because he thought that linkage embodied good teaching and good stewardship in the world. In 1997, for a conference presentation at the American Folklore Society, we decided that “activist pedagogy” was an approach to teaching and learning in which participants worked within their communities to develop and exercise problem-solving skills acquired in the academy. From this perspective, research was a form of learning, in whatever context; education was engagement with ideas and people; and service was a form of global citizenship. In other words, we aspired (perhaps a bit grandly) to be scholars/educators/citizens.

Then, in our second year, someone challenged us to put theory to practice. We did, by joining a community-wide project that was exploring Bloomington as place. The Activist Pedagogy group mobilized around a project to record stories connected to family photos. We set up recording “stations” in school gymnasiums, in a country store, at a popular local eatery, at a neighborhood block party, in the local historical society. The local newspaper loaned us its mobile studio, complete with computer scanning equipment too fancy for us to use. Newspaper coverage, community-wide programming, and a small web-site disseminated our modest results. The historical society and a local school are currently utilizing the materials we accumulated.

A tame beginning, no doubt, but perhaps just about right for a volunteer group of novices and idealists. In the course of project planning, clarifying roles, articulating expectations, taking personal accountability, interviewing, and struggling with equipment, we came face to face with adjectives we had bandied about during our year of intensive reading: collaborative, democratic, participatory, experiential, engaged, non-hierarchical, and need-oriented.

After two years, the group dissolved, in part I think because action, upon reflection—especially as it entails all those adjectives we associated with it—is daunting, time-consuming, strategically and personally challenging. It seems especially so from the safety of the academy. To continue, we had to move on from our tentative beginnings. But the immediate cause for dissolution was somewhat more pedestrian if very human: several members got into an ideological wrangle on other fronts and no longer wanted to be in the same room with each other.

Looking back, it seems to me that perhaps the greatest impact of activist pedagogy was as a catalyst (I don't claim a direct cause) for subsequent department-wide discussions, considerations, and activities: in 1999, the first class on public folklore taught in the academic year; funding for Traditional Arts Indiana, a public folklore program of IU and the Indiana Arts Commission; in 2000 and 2001, two field schools in cultural documentation which resulted in public forums, radio broadcasts, and press accounts about racial prejudice, exclusion and accessibility, stereotyping, coping skills, and activism; the incorporation of a hands-on component in the capstone course for undergraduate folklore majors; the option to do a masters' project rather than write a thesis; a dual degree MA with professional schools (library science, journalism); a departmental concentration in public arts and culture; and authorization for a faculty hire in public arts and culture. Students are more likely today than ten years ago to have the option of doing internships, working as work-study assistants, fieldworkers, webpage designers in public programs—as well as to write dissertations connected to departmental outreach projects.

As we teach more about ways to put folklore to use, we are hearing our undergrads say, "I didn't know that a folklore B.A. let you do anything other than go on to be a professor of folklore. Now I see a whole world opening up." Perhaps folklore is coming of age, like the older disciplines of psychology, medicine, and business, anthropology, and is adding a professional identity to its long -- and staunchly held -- disciplinary identity.

Activist pedagogy imagined an expanded definition of "professor." Without privileging action over contemplation or bashing the academy, activist pedagogy invited academics to do what they do best—go public as social critics. In the 2000 issue of MLA's journal *Profession*, half-a-dozen well-known public intellectuals—among them Edward Said, Noam Chomsky, Pierre Bourdieu—urged academics to commit themselves to using "merciless logical [and sociological] critique" to reveal how systems of power function with "hidden assumptions and faulty reasoning" (Bourdieu, Pierre, "For a Scholarship of Commitment," *MLA Profession 2000*: 40-45). Such a stance yields nothing. It relies on careful scholarship and respect for the tools of scholarship as it seeks to "lift complex ideas into the public sphere." What it strives to do is restore to the university one of its central functions—its "subversive role" as one among other institutions that seek to create the social conditions for working groups to express what they are—or could be—and to identify new ways of mobilizing people to work effectively together. By transcending what Bourdieu calls "the sacred mental boundary between scholarship and commitment," scholars can break out of the ivory tower to enter into sustained and vigorous exchange with activists in the world outside. As others here have amply demonstrated—and will continue to do so—there are plenty of jobs in folklore. What I wanted to add is that you—as young folklorists with fresh ideas—can play a large role in shaping the discipline that trains you, to move it in directions important to you.

### ***Joyce Ice***

(Ed. Note: *This is the paper that Dr. Ice read, not a summary of her remarks.*)

The museum profession offers a number of possibilities for folklorists and anthropologists who are interested in using their skills in a setting that combines public programming, field and library research, and analysis of the relationships between culture and works of art. Recent studies of perceptions of various cultural institutions have shown that the public places a great deal of trust in the credibility of museums. Learning that takes place in museums is frequently a self-directed,

voluntary activity, although not necessarily a solitary one. In the museum environment, a range of learning styles can be accommodated, often making the experience of an exhibition aesthetic, intellectual and sensory at once. People relate not only to the thematic interpretative content of an exhibit but subtly react to spatial dynamics, colors, and other people around them, whether as part of a family or tour group of other unknown individuals, whether staff, docents or individual visitors. It is often a person-to-person encounter within a small group that makes a visit memorable.

There are a number of ways that individuals enter the museum profession. The American Association of Museums estimates there are more than 10,000 museums in this country, ranging from arboretums to zoos, natural history, archaeology, living history, cultural history, historical sites, fine arts, and any number of specialized museums. Museums also run the gamut from private to publicly funded, or exist as part of a tribal, municipal, state or federal government museum systems. They are run in some instances entirely by volunteer boards and staff, and in others by well-compensated professional directors. The majority are professionals employed at less-than-market value for a comparable level of education, experience, and responsibility in the for-profit world. The gender gap persists: while many museums are directed by women with a majority of staff being female, the fine arts museums in large metropolitan areas tend to have male directors who are more highly paid.

The Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where I serve as director, is a part of the state system within the Museum of New Mexico. The founder, Florence Dibell Bartlett, a philanthropist from Chicago, was concerned by the threats posed by industrialization and urbanization to the survival of the folk arts in the post-World War II era. In keeping with her vision, the museum's approach to folk arts has been culturally-based and multi-disciplinary, with programmatic offerings that encourage visitors to learn through interactive participation. Interpretive strategies take into account cultural contact and change along with issues of class and gender.

As a publicly funded museum, we strive to balance our efforts to protect and preserve works of art while making them widely accessible to our various audiences as mandated by our mission. It is not unlike the National Park Service which endeavors to safeguard fragile wilderness areas and historical properties for future generations, and at the same time, tries to satisfy the demands of the present-day visitors. This dilemma for museums becomes even more challenging for us: we collect and attempt to care for art created to be ephemeral, and/or constructed from inherently unstable materials.

For the museum community, questions of authority, power and control are also at issue when presenting traditional art and its relationship to the established art world. Recent practice in the museum field has encouraged the "transparency" of museum processes to make visible the decision-making once hidden behind the scenes. Such efforts invite audiences to engage in dialogues that were previously left to experts as part of a move toward greater accountability in the use of public funding. The level of awareness and expectations of museum-goers is more critical with regard to what is appropriate in an exhibition. As the works of traditional artists and traditional cultures are recontextualized in the museum setting, I think it is the responsibility of museums through

educational programs to address aspects of appropriation and negotiation raised in relation to the art and artists. Museums can and should be forums for further exploration of this fascinating area.

As a museum administrator, I find myself integrating my academic training with experience gained in a variety of positions in different regions of the country. I have been working in the museum field for over seventeen years now, coming to the museum profession with ten years of teaching experience at the elementary and university levels.

I came to the study of folk art having grown up in West Virginia, listening to some wonderful storytellers within the family, spending time at my grandparents' rural home, and observing my great-grandmother quilting with her daughters and daughters-in-law at the family farm. It was much later, however, that I learned one might actually study these traditional elements of expressive and material culture in a more formal method.

At the University of Texas-Austin, my doctoral coursework included classes in both material culture and museum studies. For my dissertation topic, I chose to examine a quilting club in central Texas and its activities and relationships within the community through the lens of quilt-making.

Following graduate school, I took an academic position teaching folklore at Northern Arizona University. In a move back east with my husband, I was hired as a folklorist at a historical museum in upstate New York, a position which happily allowed me to do research, to conduct and write about community fieldwork, and to curate exhibitions. I also had the opportunity to serve as consultant to a number of museums and other arts and cultural organizations on folklife projects. This experience helped to prepare me for the next step, a move to museum administration, where I deal daily with challenging issues being debated in our country and world today. I enjoy having a voice in the setting of policy and in planning for the museum's future development.

As a folklorist now working in a museum located in a city known for its artists and galleries, I have gained yet another perspective on the art market. What I have recognized in Santa Fe is that folk artists who are strongly rooted in their communities, secure in who they are as individuals and clear about their roles as artists working within a living tradition, are those people best equipped to deal with the market. They come to understand the patterns of its operation and know what to expect, both positive and negative.

The museum's role in relation to folk artists, markets, and communities is complex because as a public institution, a museum must attempt to function apart from the market and yet also be tuned into it and supportive of the traditional artists and communities engaged in marketing. Now communities are negotiating cultural tourism.

Mary Catherine Bateson, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's daughter, said you can give your personal history a couple of paths—one is the logical and sequential. But if you ask someone to tell their story in terms of detours and unexpected paths, you get a richer story. You can reinvent yourself by looking at these potential detours. It is important to be engaged in satisfying, fulfilling work—something that will make a difference, no matter where you are. You must follow your own path.

The museum profession offers many challenges and opportunities for folklorists in the broad categories of curation, education, and administration. For curators, a content specialization related to art and material culture in both the U.S. and international areas is desirable. Cross-cultural and multi-disciplinary approaches that engage the public with accessible interpretations are useful. A general knowledge of museum operations is helpful as well as an attitude of public service.

Educators develop public programming that builds intellectual curiosity and encourage lifelong learning. They concentrate on the ways that museums can support teachers and provide sound educational resources and programs that enhance a range of learning styles. Those interested in museum administration are advised to learn basic financial skills, public relations, and development. More and more, donor cultivation is as important as grant-writing abilities. Knowledge of organizational culture and human resource policies and practices is essential. Study examples of best professional standards and management principles wherever they exist: in the corporate, private, government or not-for-profit arenas. One thing that you must acknowledge and accept is that there is little time to devote to research and writing projects once you're in administration. You must be a problem-solver and able to take voyeuristic satisfaction in other people's research.

Start with your own community if you are interested in museums. Also look into the professional associations: The American Association of Museums (AAM) has its annual meeting in May. The American Association of Museums website is [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org). The Council on Museum Anthropology works with the AAM and the American Anthropological Association.

### ***Mary Anne McDonald***

When I decided to go to graduate school, I wanted to work in a state folklife office in the southeast. I went to the University of North Carolina and got a master's in folklore, then did contract work for two years. Then I got what I thought was my dream job in the North Carolina folklife program at the arts council. It had benefits and all that. But after six years, I realized I didn't get to do much fieldwork. Also, as a grants administrator, I wasn't doing much folklore either. I didn't see much opportunity for the future. I took time off after my second child was born.

Then, through serendipity, I got a job in 1993 as Ethnography Coordinator for an HIV-STD (sexually transmitted disease) research project at the School of Public Health. Shortly later I went for my doctorate in public health because I needed the credibility.

There is a difference between public health work and medicine or medical anthropology. Public health works with people and communities on the prevention and treatment of disease. For example, I worked on the STEP (Sexually Transmitted Epidemic Prevention) project with the low-income rural African-American community where AIDS is growing fastest. I developed and implemented a community health advisor program of women who talked to their friends, neighbors, and relatives to provide accurate information on STD/HIV and encourage people to go to the HD for check-ups. In the course of my fieldwork, I figured out how information was passed, the sexual dynamics, etc. I consulted lay advisors who helped encourage people to use good health practices. Medicine generally focuses on the treatment of individuals. A medical research project might examine whether a new medication was more effective in curing syphilis than the standard one used.

If you are considering entering a new field, do some research. I didn't realize how much I'd need to learn about public health. My mentor asked what computer analysis program we used in folklore—like in sociology. I was assuming it was more about communities than it was. They expected me to learn lots more about public health than I wanted, and that I never use now—like statistics. I had to take two semesters of statistics in 1993, and I hadn't had math since 1972.

I didn't realize how important the doctoral credentials would be within the field.

I was shocked that when you switch fields, all the work you've done to build up your resume, your publications, etc., may count for nothing. Your accomplishments don't translate very well. It's hard. I also felt like a round peg in a square hole in graduate school. I felt that my strengths and approach were not valued in general, and were not useful for a lot of the classes. Some professors did value my background and skills. Although culture has a huge influence on health and on health behaviors, it is not often directly discussed or acknowledged.

My folklore training—the methodology I learned at UNC—has served me well. I haven't used a lot from the British and American Ballads course I took, but my training at UNC provided me with fieldwork skills, broad knowledge of the Southeast, and gave me (most importantly) a folklore approach to people and culture. I also learned a lot about different cultures in the southeast and how to deal with them in a respectful way.

What I had to give up and I miss: the emphasis on understanding people and culture. In public health, people think it's nice that you understand, but they just want the STD rates to go down. That was a shock and is difficult. Attention to aesthetics and expressive culture, and the camaraderie of other culture workers are other things I miss. I'm the only one with an Elvis shrine in my office. When Johnny Cash died, I wore black. You go home and call your friends. You get lonely.

What I gained: more opportunities, different kinds of work. It's a growing and diverse field, there's lots of funding available. I've interviewed jail inmates and streetwalkers. You listen attentively, and people will tell you anything. I began to love the jail interviews. I wanted to do a book. A small rural jail is a different world. I hung around convenience stores for a study on robbery and homicide on the job. That was really interesting—a great topic for a doctorate in anthropology. I feel somewhat needed—I've added a dimension to some of these projects that wouldn't be there if I weren't there. And I've been able to do lots of fieldwork, which is what I enjoy, and which would be hard to find folklore funding for. I'm now doing work and life histories of women working in a poultry plant. Funding came from NIEHS (National Institute of Environmental Health and Safety). They wanted to bring in the emotional and sociological aspects of this work.

Three things to remember: 1. I've had to make my niche. There aren't a lot of project ethnographers in public health. 2. It's a sales job—you have to sell what folklore can do for the work to the other researchers. 3. You have to learn to speak their language and understand their goals. For most large research projects, one has to be in on the development and writing of the proposal. If you can find people to work with who appreciate and need your skills, then you can collaborate with them to create situations for yourself.

One website where you can see Requests for Proposals in public health is <http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/index.cfm>.

### ***Molly Singer***

I started doing fieldwork in high school. My friend's mother was an oral historian. She invited me to go with her on interviews. Then in college, a professor recommended a camp at a boarding school where I ended up being hired as an English teacher. I didn't really like it. A friend steered me toward folklore. So I went to Chapel Hill. I knew I didn't want to do material culture or festivals. I had a job at a hospital interviewing tobacco workers. Then Sally Peterson from the North Carolina Museum of History hired me, but it was working with material culture. She let me sort of find my own way. I started looking for another job—I worked as a folklorist for Cityfolk, an independent folk arts organization in Dayton, Ohio, during the time when it worked with the National Council for the Traditional Arts to co-produce the National Folk Festival in Dayton. I did lots of occupational work both in Ohio and North Carolina. I liked the networks of the artists, how they were educators, or pushers of the political process, or weren't. I wanted to leverage cultural resources with economic and political resources.

Folklore is more a means than an end for me. You need to think about the skills and knowledge you've gained. I work for an occupational group, the International City/County Management Association (city managers, county administrators). I do a content approach and a process approach. In content, I work a lot with environmental justice and brownfields (old factories and other land tracts that may have environmental contamination), and have been a liaison in border communities. Brownfields redevelopment entails turning old sites like factories into lofts and other useful things.

In process work, I help local governments plan inclusive and successful processes—land planning, civic communication, etc. If your local government works well, you don't think about it. Your street is paved, your trash is hauled. Local government officials need to reach a number of stakeholders—private sector, state and federal officials, citizens, etc. Those groups also need to reach local government professionals. I put myself in between them and help the process. The Council for Excellence in Government is doing town meetings all over, all at universities. And I suggested thinking about churches, and having an African-American double-dutch jump-rope team instead of having the color guard present the flag, etc.

I like my job because it is process oriented—I help people with projects from the beginning to the end. I like this work because it has many, many stakeholders from many cultural groups. My perspective of who a stakeholder is has changed. I consider my position to be folklore-related because I am working with an occupational group. I do lots of advocacy for cultural resources, help them see culture and art as broader than fine arts.

Dos and don'ts: Folklore is the means, not the end. Folklore is my secret weapon. I don't tell people that I'm using folklore on them. I'm a catalyst in the system. I don't wave the folklore flag. Sometimes I feel bad about it. It is important to use other skills—grantwriting, facilitation, interviewing, etc., and to be creative and patient with your work. I see opportunity here. I have freedom to pursue projects. I have mentors. If you choose to do this kind of work you should be



willing to learn about financing, urban planning, how a bill becomes a law, etc. Another important thing to do is to look at trends. Aging in place, for instance.

**Amy Skillman**, [skillman@culturalpartnerships.org](mailto:skillman@culturalpartnerships.org)

When I headed off to graduate school in folklore, I remember that my father said, “Make sure you do something with this. If you’re borrowing money to study folklore, you have that obligation.” That’s stuck with me. I call myself a folklorist. It opens a door that lets me walk in and explain what I mean by being a folklorist. Folklore is a methodology, a means to a different kind of end. I knew that I didn’t want to be a teacher, I didn’t want an academic career. I went to UCLA where Michael Owen Jones was my mentor in applied folklore. He had us think about how you apply ideas in the real world. As early as 1974, I had on my resume a phrase about breaking down barriers of tension between communities and helping people understand and become acquainted with each other to break down those barriers.

I created a consulting company with two other women after graduate school. Our one big job was for Governor Jerry Brown, who hired us to do a workshop for his staff on community outreach in San Diego. We eventually melted away. I struggled to find the job that would meet my desires. I worked with performers in a state park, a film festival featuring films by and for people with disabilities. Then I applied for the Missouri state folklorist job and got it. One boss, one paycheck, one job. I moved to Pennsylvania to the state agency that was doing folklore. So I’ve had lots of experience with government.

The Institute for Cultural Partnerships, where I work now, was created out of the dismantling of a state agency—the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission. ICP is a nonprofit—we receive some funding from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. One word of advice for nonprofits: diversify, diversify, diversify your funding. We have five professional staff, including three folklorists. One of the non-folklorists is a refugee resettlement person, and the other is a development officer who came out of public health. The challenging thing was to go from being a state agency to a local agency. We still do statewide work, but we had to reconstruct our board and start making local connections. We’ve been doing competency training in public health in our area. We work with a more community-based method of disseminating HIV services, to get people to come into the community HIV center. We do cultural diversity training and conflict management training, both in state government and corporations. Our focus is paying attention to culture and helping human relations departments in corporations understand what culture and diversity mean.

How we get our contracts: People call us for diversity training workshops. We could say, sure we’ll show up. But we convince them to have us come in and do an ethnography of their environment to see what issues have come up to lead to them thinking they need diversity training. Then we work with their staff to create a diversity training mechanism. It’s a longer-term contract than just a workshop. We’ve also created an organization that is concerned about the backlash toward immigrants and refugees, especially after 9/11. It includes churches, temples, mosques, corporations, universities, the YWCA, etc. They have also created programs responding to issues of diversity. We are also working with the FBI office in the local community, the media, and the Muslim community to address issues of discrimination.

I think of myself as a community activist. Follow your interests and your heart. You have a range of skills. I'm good at listening. If we have the content that we want, we can be happy in a job. Then you can be creative in translating it across disciplines. How does that translate into other jobs? We're mediators.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Proposal for a Tenure-Line Hire in Folklore

*Margaret R. Yocom, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia*

### **PROPOSAL FOR TENURE-LINE HIRE IN FOLKLORE**

3 April 2000

Folklore, Mythology, and Literature Concentration

#### **SUMMARY.**

Consistently high numbers in all folklore courses as well as the demand for folklore (twice as many students try to register for folklore courses than there are seats) indicate the need for a second folklorist who could round out our current program and offer new courses in understaffed areas that are of interest to the Department.

By “folklorists,” I mean a scholars who identify themselves as folklorists; whose degrees are most likely to be granted by departments of American Studies, Anthropology, Comparative Literature, English, and Folklore and Folklife; who publish on folklore topics; and who actively participate in the American Folklore Society and in state, regional, or international folklore societies. Candidates who demonstrate a proficiency in literature, composition/ethnography, and cultural studies would be in an especially strong position for this hire.

#### **EXISTING COURSES.**

A second folklorist could be hired to teach some courses currently offered, such as ENGL 333 “Folklore of the Americas” and perhaps one of the current ENGL 491 “Special Topics in Folklore” (Traditional Art / Folklore and Gender / Traditional Narrative).

#### **NEW COURSES.**

The primary objective, however, should be to further develop the Folklore, Mythology, and Literature Concentration and to contribute to other concentrations as well. Such a person would automatically add to the College of Arts and Sciences Minor in Folklore and Mythology (Yocom, Mattusch, co-coordinators). The following are strands of development that we could pursue:

- a folklorist who specializes in postcolonial/global/ethnic studies, especially with a focus on Asian, Latino, and Middle Eastern cultures in the United States and, perhaps, in the countries of origin. Interests especially in traditional music, festival, religion, mythology (as a complement to Yocom’s in narrative, material culture).
- a folklorist who specializes in African American traditions or the African diaspora, especially with interests in traditional music, festival, religion, mythology.
- a folklorist who specializes in public sector issues: work in museums, elementary and secondary education, folklife festivals, state and local arts agencies, mental health facilities, medical facilities, therapeutic settings, conflict resolution.
- a folklorist who specializes in Native American traditions.
- a folklorist who specializes in the study of place, environmental issues, and non-fiction writing. Interests especially in traditional music, festival, religion, mythology.

#### **NEED AS INDICATED BY RECENT ENROLLMENTS.**

1. Consistently high numbers in folklore courses.

Numbers of students trying to register for folklore courses indicate that for every ENGL 333 and ENGL 491 (except “Traditional Arts”) we now offer, we could offer two filled or almost-filled sections. Please see Table 1.

## **2. Overwhelming majority of folklore students are English majors.**

Please see Table 2.

## **3. Consistently high numbers in Folklore, Mythology, and Literature Concentration.**

When several of us proposed the concentration, I thought we’d have about six to eight students at one time. The numbers have always been higher than my expectations. From John Radner’s memos:

December 1998, total	12
April 1999, total	24
November 1999, total	11
March 2000, total	15

The ratio, then, of faculty to students here is also high, given I’m the only folklorist.

## **4. Increasing numbers in the Folklore and Mythology Minor.**

Please see Table 3.

## **INCREASED NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE UNIVERSITY.**

The needs of the Department and the University are too many to be handled by one folklorist. There are more requests for internships, independent studies, and theses than I can handle; since I’m the only folklorist, if I say no, the student goes without the folklore emphasis he or she wants. With interest in composition and ethnography and with the new *English Matters*, there’s even more opportunities for folklore contributions to Departmental projects. I’ve been asked to offer courses in Honors, New Century College, Andros Island, Cultural Studies, Women’s Studies, but my Department courses have taken priority. Requests for folklore input on curriculum development outside the Department also remain heavy. Folklore performances and extra-curricular programs could add to many university events, such as Women’s History Month, Hispanic Studies Month, and African American Studies, but I can’t help to the degree I’d like to. Having another person would help develop the possibilities.

## **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.**

A folklore hire now could help us build toward the future.

No university in this area has developed as strong an undergraduate program in folklore and related fields (mythology, art history, religious studies, classics, theater, music) as we have. Our program has attracted national attention in folklore as a model for undergraduate development: I’ve been asked to speak on our Concentration and Minor at the “Future of Folklore and the Academy” symposium, October 2000.

And, no university in this area--or this state--has developed a strong master’s program in folklore, either. (GWU has a folklore track in the American Studies program, staffed by one folklorist who specializes in traditional architecture and art). We could go further, especially if we developed a program with a strong public sector focus that could also feed into the Cultural Studies PhD.

More public sector folklorists work in this metropolitan area than anywhere else in the world, given the NEH (Director Bill Ferris, Deputy Director John Roberts), NEA (Director Bill Ivey), the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, the American Memory Project at the Library of Congress, the National Council of the Traditional Arts, the National Task Force on Education, the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Heritage at the Smithsonian, and several of the Smithsonian Museums. A list of folklorists in Baltimore would further swell the numbers. All these organizations offer internships, and some offer summer fieldwork schools.

Several other universities (Western Kentucky, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) are currently adding public sector specialists to their faculty, but none have the nearby resources that we do. Few of these institutions focus on folklore and education, a growing interest in the field of folklore. With an additional hire, we could offer an NEH summer seminar for teachers interested in folklore.

Constructing a master's with strong intellectual and applied components, as well as internships, could also provide courses of interest to other parts of our graduate program, especially those in teaching, composition/ethnography, and non-fiction writing. (For example, it could deepen conversations about "multicultural education": see Kimberly Lau, "Serial Logic: Folklore and Difference in the Age of Feel-Good Multiculturalism" *Journal of American Folklore*, Winter 2000)

#### **Addenda:**

- Surveys of undergraduates and GMU graduates who've studied folklore about the role of folklore in their college education, their jobs, and the possibility of a hire in folklore.
- Examples of essays by graduate students in folklore PhD programs.
- For websites on graduate programs in folklore and folklife, see my website (<http://mason.gmu.edu/~myocom/index.html>). Go to "Folklore Links" ([www.gmu.edu/folklore/resources/](http://www.gmu.edu/folklore/resources/)).

#### ***Survey of undergraduates and GMU graduates who've studied folklore about the role of folklore in their college education, their jobs, and the possibility of a hire in folklore***

The Department of English has begun talking about the possibility of hiring a second folklorist, and I'd like to gather opinions and ideas from students. Any responses you can give to any of the questions below would be very helpful. Please return to my mailbox in Rob 487A or to me in my office Rob 439A--if possible by Monday 3 April or early Tuesday, 4 April. Or have a friend send it to me on email. Thank you so much for your help! Professor Yocom

Name. Please don't give your name.

Your age \_\_\_\_\_, gender \_\_\_\_\_

Your major \_\_\_\_\_

Your status at Mason (soph/jr/sr/grad) \_\_\_\_\_

Folklore courses taken, being taken now

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--Given your major in \_\_\_\_\_, how has folklore (and your fieldwork experiences, fieldtrips, guest speakers, Archive) been valuable to your program of study? Of what benefit do you see folklore to the study of English (Communications, Psychology, Education, etc.)?

--Of what help do you imagine the your study in folklore might be as you go out into your preferred workplace (s)?

--Why do you see folklore as an important component of the Department of English, if you do?

--What other folklore subjects do you think a Department and University like ours should have? What would you like to study that's not offered now? Current offerings: introduction to wide range of folklore genres (333) traditional art (491), folklore and gender (491), ghost and fairy narratives (491), folk narrative and storytelling (513), writing ethnography (311). Some possibilities: music and dance, public sector (preparation to work in state arts councils, folklife festivals, museums), African American, ethnic folklore/postcolonial studies (Asian/Latino/Middle Eastern, especially), festival and ritual, folklore and literature, folklore and film.

--What have you wanted to do in folklore that you haven't been able to do because of lack of resources at Mason?

--Anything else you'd like to add?

**Table 1. Enrollment figures in folklore.**

Semester, Course Number	Maximum enrollment	Actual enrollment	Audit	Wait- listed	*Total demand for course
F 96 ENGL 333 F of Americas	35	33	0	0	58
F 96 ENGL 333	35	33	0	0	51
F 97 ENGL 333	35	34	0	1	64
F 97 ENGL 333	30	29	0	1	61
S 99 ENGL 333	35	34	0	1	60
F 99 ENGL 333	30	31	0	0	54
S 97 ENGL 491 Gender	33	32	0	4	75
S 99 ENGL 491	30	26	1	0	46
S 98 ENGL 491 Spirit World	30	30	0	5	82
F 99 ENGL 491	30	31	2	1	57
S 96 ENGL 491 Tradit Arts	30	30	0	2	55

S 98 ENGL 491	30	26	0	0	39
S 00 ENGL 491	27	24	0	2	41
F 96 <b>ENGL 513</b> <b>Trad Narrative</b>	18	15	0	0	30
S 99 ENGL 513	18	13	0	0	17
S 96 <b>ENGL 311</b> <b>Wr Ethnogra</b>	22	17	0	0	31
S 00 ENGL 311 Wr Ethnography	22	16	0	0	32

**\*“Total demand”** is the number of students who tried to register for the course; includes those who were able to register.

**Table 2. Majors in folklore courses.**

Cou rse	Sem est	Engl	Adj	Ant h	Com	Ex S	Hist	IE	FL	NC	Phil	Psy	Und	Ttl
333	F97													
333	S99													
333	F99	23	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	31
491 Arts	S00	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	24
491 SpW	F99	20	0	1	2	2	3	1	1	1	0	2	0	32
311 Eth n	S00	10	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	16

IE School of Information Technology and Engineering

FL Modern and Classical Languages (Foreign Languages)

**Table 3. Enrollments in the CAS Minor, Folklore and Mythology**

ENROLLED:

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**FOLK Folklore and Mythology**

1998 Fall 1

1998 Spr 1

1998 Fall 1

1999 Spr 2



1999 Sum 2

1999 Fall 3

2000 Spr 6

**DEGREE CONFERRED:**

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1998F 1

1999B 1

Taken from our reports page:

<http://registrar.gmu.edu/reports/index.html>

## Appendix B: Tips on Resumes for Work in Public Sector Folklore

*Researched and compiled by Kathleen Condon, Consulting Folklorist, Brooklyn New York,  
[kathleencondon@aol.com](mailto:kathleencondon@aol.com)*

“I think the most important thing is to make sure that it's clear what your skills are, not only the projects you've worked with. The bottom line is: what can you do for me? Or more: can you do what I need to get done? For people who are out of school, but haven't had a first fulltime position, I look for evidence that they are sincerely committed to the profession and have done research on their own. It may be small, but it shows initiative -- which is critical for most folklore work. Self-starters are needed for most contracts and a true self-starter doesn't wait for the paycheck to be active in this field.”

—Maida Owens, *Folklife Program, Louisiana Division of the Arts, Baton Rouge*

“Look at the job description and tweak your resume each time to emphasize the language in the job description. In these days of computers, this is not hard to do and you should never think that one standard resume will fill the bill for any job. Without padding your resume, you can place emphasis on different experiences that you have had in the workforce that will fit the position that you are applying for.”

—Peggy Bulger, *American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC*

“When I review resumes, I always look for a culture area or genre expertise, and I look for a serious experiential dimension in this area. I also look for skills in at least one ‘genre of representation,’ such as photography, exhibits, digital audio, and festival presentation. I advise people to use the word ‘independent’ rather than ‘freelance.’ This communicates more of a sense of purpose, especially when you also make clear your areas of interest and your reasons for working independently. I also tell people never to forget what you really love to do, and to set out to do that. If you see how you package yourself in your resume as the framing around those goals rather than your goals being defined by the job you want, then you have a better chance of being true to your own interests. Once you do that, other things kind of take care of themselves.”

—Nick Spitzer, *American Routes, New Orleans, Louisiana*

“Nobody hires you because of what you look like on paper. Your resume is not an isolated document but rather one aspect of a larger strategy. Getting a job is a process, a negotiation. If you get the call back, then in the interview you're going to almost have to act like an ‘insider,’ speaking knowledgeably about the organization's track record and how the x, y and z that you would like to do for them would help them to advance. For instance, if you are interested in mounting exhibits on African-American culture in southern museums, then you need to know the strengths and weaknesses of the collections and programs of the various museums in that region before you approach them. It's better than it once was, but we still face the fact that many in museums think folk art is less important than fine art. Art museums are slow to hire from outside of the art world. On the other hand, museums are always interested in ‘one-of-a-kind’ situations. If you can bring expertise on a hot topic that is important to them but marginal to their expertise, then they might look at you. My experience has been that there is usually one person who really ‘gets it’ and becomes your advocate on the inside; your resume should be sent to the person most likely to understand the value you can bring to their institution.”

—*John Vlach, American Studies Department, George Washington University, Washington, District of Columbia*

“During my twenty years working in the public sector, I had never kept a CV (curriculum vitae) where you write down every little thing you've ever done. I'd made a zillion presentations that I never put on my resume, and now that I'm working in a university humanities center, all those things have meaning for the academic department heads I work with. I've been able to construct a CV retrospectively by including presentations I've found in old files and conference schedules, but I know I'm still missing quite a few. Thus my advice to new professionals is to cover your bases by always keeping your CV going; once you have that, it becomes a resource for your various resumes. Also, on my computer, I keep a very short (one page) resume, short (two pages) resume, and full resume (about 5 pages), as well as a three-sentence bio, a one-paragraph bio, and one-page bio.”

—*Elaine Thatcher, Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, Utah State University, Logan*

“I'm not interested in long CVs. Resumes should be 5-6 pages maximum—two to three for someone junior. I prefer resumes to list recent experiences first and go back from there. I want bullets with brief descriptions of the kinds of tasks that people have done, not long narratives. I need resumes I can skim and in a snapshot get a sense of what a person can do and has done. If a person doesn't stay in staff positions long, I tend to notice and to wonder what's up with that. I read resumes mainly for work history and so I don't need to see family or personal details. Listings under 'other professional activities' help me understand how plugged-in someone is to particular networks. Typos drive me nuts.

“It's a dilemma, when you have skills and expertise in several different areas and you want to convey that. I handle that by first listing a brief work chronology, then following this with sections featuring various concentrations of expertise, such as 'written and media productions' or 'public programming and meeting coordination.' The expertise headings allow me to include details on specific projects and products that don't fit in the position descriptions. Of course, you should only include expertise headings in areas where you have enough work to list; otherwise you'll be calling attention to the brevity of your work in that sphere.”

—*Betsy Peterson, Fund for Folk Culture, Santa Fe, New Mexico*

“I always look for something on a resume along the lines of 'Additional Interests'—hobbies in disguise—but I do like to get a sense of the other person besides the job person.”

—*Kay Turner, Brooklyn Arts Council, Brooklyn, New York*

“I think people should be themselves in resumes. I like to get a sense of the person coming through, to be able to imagine the person behind the resume. That's why I kind of recoil at pat phrases that seem like they come out of a resume-writing book. In reviewing resumes I first hope to find that the person has at least some sort of experience beyond academia. In addition, I like to see a breadth of experience in a resume, even if that includes unpaid work. Especially when someone is starting out, I look to see that what they have done is interesting and shows relevant experience—whether that is a field project or volunteer work. Knowing what someone has written and published is helpful but not imperative to me. As opposed to CVs, the resumes required outside academia should be written with the knowledge that they will be quickly scanned and will need to concisely convey experiences in ways that will grab readers' attention.”

—*Robert Baron, Folk Arts Program, New York State Council on the Arts, New York, New York*

“I look at a resume for hard evidence of personal passion, which would include participation in public programs, the development of media projects or exhibitions, and interaction with community organizations, venues, and activities. When there is personal initiative beyond the research and presentations required for university courses, the individual is apparently committed, focused, and organized enough to get more done than the average student, or, at least, has proven their interest in working with other people. Most of the folklorists I hired had made opportunities for themselves to work ‘in the field,’ and this is usually apparent on a resume. I like good students, too. I don’t discount the hard-won achievement of superior academic standing.”

—Bobby Fulcher, *Cumberland Trail State Park, Lake City, Tennessee*

“My advice would be to not make your resume too academic, to keep it short (two to three pages tops), and to remember who the audience is and shape the resume accordingly. I like the new NEA format for resumes—a one-page, two-to-three-paragraph description. One of the first jobs I applied to out of graduate school was at the Hudson River Museum in the education department. When I applied, I took out the whole section on conference presentations, printed it on light brown paper and I got an interview.”

—Kathleen Mundell, *Cultural Resources, Inc., Rockport, Maine*

“I don’t like reading resumes that run more than two pages. A resume should list *selected* experiences and publications, just enough to get across things you have done in the past and can do in the future—for example, that you produced a CD or that you have written for various audiences. I find it useful when a person can begin their resume with a brief paragraph giving a general overview of their skills and goals. You can include this same information in a cover letter, but the text stands out more clearly when highlighted in a resume than when imbedded in a paragraph. Don’t forget that when resumes are reviewed in bulk, cover letters are often stapled behind resumes. After the introductory text, I like to see descriptions of work experiences that help me understand what this person will bring to a new situation—not just the specific experiences, but also the ways they can be applied. Examples would be ‘I’ve done community-based research,’ ‘I can teach documentary skills,’ or ‘I have the ability to work with concepts like aesthetics or history, or meaning and community.’ And they should list not only their skills, but also the specific groups of people they may have worked with, as well as what groups they would be well-positioned to work with in the future. Seeing all this helps me reference the kind of jobs the person has done to their initial summary and goals. When I am hiring, education isn’t the thing I look at first; I would suggest listing this at the end of a resume.”

—Barbara Lau, *Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina*

“I suggest people work up a one-page ‘puff piece’ and a one-paragraph bio, as these are often requested by grant writers and by those assembling panels and writing press releases.”

—Pat Wells, *Consulting Folklorist, Murfreesboro, Tennessee*

“I sent in my vitae when applying for my current position, and I would encourage others to send as much detail about their work as individual application situations allow. Because our field is small, the volume of applicants for particular positions is generally low. If I receive, say, fifteen responses to a position announcement, I prefer CVs over resumes because they give me more information.”

—Rory Turner, *Maryland State Arts Council, Baltimore*

“Always take into account what prospective employers are looking for, and don’t be afraid to bend resume formats to best highlight what you have to offer in ways employers will understand. Study as

many different resumes as possible, particularly in public folklore and related fields, to learn the many options you have in this regard. Describe work experiences in bullet points beginning with active verbs highlighting skills important to employers (i.e., ‘wrote,’ ‘researched,’ ‘organized,’ ‘documented,’ etc.). Use as few words as possible, but always include enough details to enable just about anyone reading your resume to begin to understand what you have done, why the work was useful or interesting, and what you might have to offer them. Avoid one-page formats; they don’t provide enough detail to describe folklorists’ highly variable activities and skills.

—Kathleen Condon, *Consulting Folklorist, Brooklyn, New York*

## Appendix C: ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT: A SAMPLE FORMAT FOR FOLKLORISTS

Erika Brady, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, [erika.brady@wku.edu](mailto:erika.brady@wku.edu).

*This template is adapted for folklorists from one used for the annual faculty review process at Western Kentucky University. But even if your current primary employment is not with an academic institution, maintaining this record will keep your options open and support such an affiliation in the future. Remember that many academic institutions are currently interested in broadening their constituencies and outreach activities. Materials from this file can be mined and refined in the future for use in either resume or CV.*

**SUMMARY OF CURRENT EMPLOYMENT:** (include changes from previous year, including promotions, expansion or change of duties, etc.)

### **BREAKDOWN OF YEAR'S ACTIVITIES:**

#### **I. ACADEMIC TEACHING**

A. Philosophy of teaching. Summarize approach to teaching, including references to methodologies and connections to research and professional activities as applicable.

B. Courses (including independent studies) taught and thesis committees chaired or served on. Include enrollment data, and your relationship with sponsoring institution if not your primary employer.

C. Symposia, workshops or other skill-building teaching settings. (Include sponsoring organization, target participants, date, and any relevant information concerning outcome for participants: e.g., certification, continuing ed. credits, etc.)

D. Innovations, new course development, skills development, evidence of student learning, incorporation of appropriate technologies, etc. Attach copies of syllabi, certificates of workshop attendance, formal or informal evaluations, sample communications with students, or other material.

#### **II. ACADEMIC RESEARCH, WRITING, AND RELATED ACTIVITY**

A. Items appearing in print in previous year. (Include copies; note if publication is juried.)

B. Items accepted for publication (Include copies, note if publication is juried.)

C. Work in Progress, with evidence of publication interest from journal and press editors.

D. Academic Papers, Lectures, and Readings Delivered Outside of Assigned Classes (Attach copies as available and appropriate. Include sponsoring organization, date, location, contact person, and any follow-up thanks or feedback you receive.)

E. Honors, Scholarships, Fellowships, Appointments, and Listings (Attach copies as appropriate.)

F. Editorial Duties (Include list of manuscripts refereed with publishers or journals specified.)

G. Professional academic consulting, including promotion and proposal reviews, prize committees, translations, etc. (Include organization and letters of thanks as appropriate, but be careful not to violate confidentiality when including info in vita or resume.)

H. Grants proposed and awarded. (Attach abstracts, letters of award, etc.)

I. Other

### **III. SERVICE**

A. Committees (within your institution)

B. Non-academic public talks, workshops, etc. to community and service organizations, etc. (Include sponsoring organization, date, location, and contact person, as well as any follow-up thanks you receive.)

C. Non-academic public presentations in performance settings (e.g., emceeing or workshop presentations at festivals, concerts, etc.)

D. Media involvement:

--Consultation by journalists (copy of print publication, date of broadcast and program name if radio/TV, contact person, date, letter of thanks or in text acknowledgment if relevant.

--On-air consultation (e.g. Halloween segment on evening news, etc.): program title and date.

--media presentations (radio, TV, or Internet production): title, length, date, sponsoring organization, station or URL, approximate sized or geographical range of audience.

E. Other work with external constituencies.

### **IV. GRANTSMANSHIP**

A. Grants proposed (summarize, including your role both in writing and implementation)

B. Grants assisted (summarize, including your role.)

C. Panel and other advisory activity: agency, program, and dates.

### **V. HONORS, ACHIEVEMENTS, AWARDS, BOARD APPOINTMENTS, ELECTED POSITIONS**

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## **PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO**

### **SAMPLE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT**

*A portfolio can be an important tool in your job seeking process. Assemble the contents with an eye to the specific job in question, place in a neat, professional-looking notebook, and bring it to your job interview. Be prepared to “walk through” the contents with your interviewers, and to leave it with them when you depart. (Be sure that you are including copies of materials only, no originals.) There are some excellent books and even videos on portfolio preparation which can be adapted for use by folklorists.*

- 1) Cover page
- 2) Table of Contents
- 3) Resume
- 4) Writing sample
- 5) Evidence of teaching competence (syllabi, for example)
- 6) Samples of project work (e.g., successful grant application or Historic Properties proposal, etc.)
- 7) Samples of photography, website development, and other skills.
- 8) Evidence of project participation and other activities (e.g., letters of thanks).

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### **NOTE REGARDING “VITA” / “CURRICULUM VITAE” / “CURRICULUM VITA”**

You will see all three. The second, although correct Latin usage, is considered pedantic by some. The last is considered barbaric by others. The first is generally a safe choice.

A final old fashioned quibbling convention: Unless your dissertation has been published as a book, do not underline it in your vita or resume. Rather, enclose it in quotes as you would an article.



## Appendix D: WORKING WITH FOLKLIFE ARCHIVES

*Compiled by Steve Green, Western Folklife Center, Elko, Nevada, with thanks to the respondents, March 2004*

Archivists and librarians working with folklife and ethnographic collections were approached through the listserv of the Archives and Libraries Section of the American Folklore Society and were invited to respond to the following questions:

- a) How did you personally become interested in and then involved working as an archivist or librarian with ethnographic materials? In other words "what's your story?"
- b) Do you see a need for more people working in the area of folklife archives?
- c) What do you see as major challenges for folklife and ethnographic collections? Why do we need librarians and archivists with specialization in cultural studies – meaning what do they bring that isn't provided by "ordinary" archivists?
- d) What advice would you have for anyone interested in pursuing working in folklife archives as a profession?

### Responses From Professionals In The Field

*Note: Throughout the document, MLS refers to a Masters in Library Science degree.*

*Peggy Yocom*

*George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia*

When I was a graduate student in folklore at University of Massachusetts in Amherst, I set up an archive system for folklorist George Carey. It seemed important to me that the work students were doing on their own traditions be preserved to help tell the story of the region. When I came to George Mason University in 1977 to teach folklore and saw everything my students were collecting, I felt even more strongly that this work should be housed for others to read, enjoy, and use

I would hope that archiving would be taught to all or most folklore students so as they take positions as university and/or public sector folklorists, they'll set up or maintain archives of their own. Two students of mine who interned in our Northern Virginia Folklife Archive now have jobs in archiving: one as an information specialist in the Department of Justice. Training in folklore archives can apply to other fields, as well.

At our Archive, one challenge is the pressure of time—setting aside the time to do archival work in the midst of all other tasks. So, paid internships and release time are crucial.

Specialization helps not only in building thesauri but also in understanding the collections. A person who is not a folklorist would have a hard time teaching students how to use our NVF Archive.

Internships are key experiences

*Michael Taft*  
*American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC*

Before becoming a folklore student in 1971, I had a number of jobs in libraries and archives and had always intended to become a librarian. But then I got hooked by folklore and went on to a career in that discipline. At Memorial University, I worked in the folklore archive and always enjoyed the information retrieval side of the discipline—archiving was stressed in the Memorial folklore program at that time. I ended up writing a number of reference works in folklore that combined my interests in folklore with info retrieval. After twenty-five years teaching, conducting fieldwork, and writing about folklore, I switched back to my first intention—I received an MLS from the University of Alberta in 1996. The combination of a Ph.D. in Folklore and the MLS opened the door to several positions at ethnographic archives. I worked at the Southern Folklife Collection at University of North Carolina, the archive of the Vermont Folklife Center, and now I am the Head of the Archive of Folk Culture at Library of Congress.

It will never be a large part of the discipline, but it will always be a necessary part. It is important that the discipline train its students in current archiving methodology, since almost all folklorists are archivists, if only of their own collections, and many folklorists will end up in positions at state arts agencies and other such institutions that contain ethnographic materials that need the skills of an archivist

The major challenge is preserving the collections amassed over the last 100 years. This means carefully-planned digitization programs. Most trained archivists know only about paper preservation. Most sound engineers know only about modern digital media. Someone trained in folklore will be aware of multi-format collections and will be better attuned to older formats for sound and moving image. There is a need for librarians, archivists and sound engineers who have a "feel" for ethnographic materials, and who have enough knowledge to be able to supply meaningful descriptions (metadata) to ethnographic collections.

My advice is to obtain two MAs. One in some ethnographic discipline and another in librarianship, archiving, information management, records management, or sound engineering.

*Andy Kolovos*  
*Vermont Folklife Center, Middlebury*

Before even attending grad school I worked as a "para-professional" archivist for a small (believe it or not) parapsychology organization in New York City that has a wonderful historical collection. When I applied to grad school I applied both to Indiana University for folklore and New York University for their history and archives program. After hearing from both places, I basically flipped a coin and went to IU.

During my time at IU I realized a few things: 1) I didn't want to be a professor; 2) I probably couldn't get an academic job even if I wanted one; and 3) I didn't want to work as a public folklorist. As an MA student at IU, I worked as the assistant to the MLA Folklore index and, as a result of my pre-grad school experience, with the archival stuff from Richard Dorson's Gary (Indiana) Project. As the panic regarding my employment future began to set in I noted that my then-girlfriend's brother-in-law had just begun library school. This got me thinking about going to library school

myself, and I quickly discovered that IU's MLS program has a special collections/archives track. Voila. My past experience, my interest in archives and folklore, and the need to be able to find work all came together. After I wrapped up my PhD coursework I applied to IU's library school and started classes. Ideally I wanted to find a way to combine folklore and archives professionally, but I wasn't too hopeful.

Then, thanks to the intercession of at least one guardian angel, I was contacted about the job at the Vermont Folklife Center, interviewed and hired. Been here since and love what I do.

I see a need for more archivists to develop an awareness of the special needs of folklife/ethnographic materials—both from the perspectives of content and their preservation issues. I also see a need for more folklorists to develop an awareness of how to preserve their field materials—especially in the areas of digital audio and digital photography. Yikes! I'm not on PUBLORE, but if half of what I hear regarding discussions in this area is true, the future of a lot of these materials is in danger.

I absolutely see a value in more folklorists and ethnomusicologists getting advanced archival training, in particular MLS degrees and such. More professionals trained to work with ethnographic materials gives us a larger voice in Folklore/Ethnomusicology as well as in the community of information professionals—whether or not they are employed as archivists/librarians or are working in folklore. I'd love for there to be an "ethnographic" archives section in the Society of American Archivists (SAA) —"oral history" just doesn't really cover what I do.

Coordinated efforts to preserve digital multi-media materials, the development of a standard descriptive vocabulary, building a greater awareness of the special skills that archivists and librarians bring to the preservation of field materials.

Most importantly, the eventual assumption of all that is Oral History within the intellectual context of ethnography should be undertaken with the use of military force. This is a long term goal.

Archivists/librarians with training in ethnographic fields bring the ability to interpret the content of folklife materials in light of both the history of folklore/ethnomusicology/anthropology and ethnographic research methods. Important stuff if you want to make sense of it all.

At least an MA in an ethnographic field and an MLS, ideally with some training or experience with audio, video or digital media. Be prepared, and trained, to work outside an ethnographic collection and in a more traditional archival repository or library as well. I got lucky.

*Steve Green*  
*Western Folklife Center, Elko, Nevada*

I grew up in New England and was captivated as a child in the mid-1950s by folk music I listened to on Burl Ives and Pete Seeger records (thank you Folkways!). In the 1960s I became caught up in the Harvard Square / Boston coffeehouse scene (Club 47, etc.), and was an avid record buyer and fan of many singer-songwriters of the time. In retrospect, I was absorbing a tremendous catalog of folk songs from North America and the Anglo & African-American diasporas. But while records produced by scholars like Ken Goldstein and A. L. Lloyd helped expose me to traditional songs and

ballads, I was not able to hear actual field recordings much because very little was available on record at the time. I do remember discovering some anthologies compiled by Peter Kennedy and Alan Lomax and somehow these recordings resonated for me in ways that recordings by coffeehouse performers did not. The Topic and Leader labels from England became an important source for me, and when I was in eleventh grade, a friend turned me on to old-time American string band music played by the New Lost City Ramblers, which opened wide the door to Appalachian and southern music forms generally, including bluegrass. There is no need to chronicle my trajectory through all my influences— it's enough to say that it was folk music first and foremost that drew my interest to the larger field of folklore. And I'm sure many others besides me had a somewhat romantic attraction to the human experience (often "cultural otherness") whether it was through Farm Security Administration photographs from the 1930s, from music heard on records, or from stories read in books.

After dropping out of college in the late 1960s, I lived near Ithaca, New York and then in southern Vermont where I indulged my dreams of being a performing musician, trying to play anything with strings on it in a range of musical idioms that all appealed to me. In the mid-1970s I began working on the grounds-crew of the Smithsonian's annual Festival of American Folklife on the National Mall in D.C. and subsequently worked that festival for eleven years. It was around that time that I became interested in doing fieldwork, visiting and recording musicians mostly in New England. I also returned to a small college in Vermont where I was able to obtain a B.A. with a split major in Folklore and Irish History. About 1980, I discovered the treasure of the Flanders Ballad Collection at Middlebury College which was housed in the library's Special Collections department. I spent considerable time in that collection as a researcher and also undertook to prepare some finding aids to assist library personnel with content of field recordings on tape. I think that is where I really caught the archives bug.

The Festival of American Folklife continued to expand my musical and cultural horizons as I worked in various capacities (sound tech and stage manager) with people and traditions from around the world. Ultimately, I was inspired to go to graduate school in ethnomusicology and I ended up at Brown University where Prof. Jeff Titon had just been appointed Chair of the ethno program. Jeff shared my interests in social aspects of music making around the world and encouraged me in my studies relating to music and anthropology. However, the practicalities of making a living were beginning to press upon me, and I felt I had only a few options with a degree in ethnomusicology. University teaching did not seem like my cup of tea for various reasons, and being a little burned out on festival work, I didn't think that public sector arts administration was going to appeal to me much either. A classmate convinced me to take my Masters in ethnomusicology then pursue a library degree so I could stay involved with music archives. So I did that, attending Simmons College in Boston where I got my MLS. While at Simmons I pursued internships and class projects that all had some connection to ethnographic and folklore collections. In one instance I prepared a finding aid for the Mellinger Henry Papers at the John Hay Library in Providence. Another class project looked at audio preservation issues in libraries and archives (a subject not very well developed at that time). And I was able to land an internship at Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology where I worked in the early stages of developing the museum's archives through grant-writing.

Since getting my MLS degree, I have worked professionally at cultural and regional archives and libraries in Kentucky, Texas, North Carolina, Maine, and Nevada. I have been involved in organizations like the Society of American Archivists and the Association for Recorded Sound

Collections and I monitor several listservs in order to stay informed about standards and issues in preservation and archives management.

In recent years I've become increasingly interested in the challenges of preservation and access for media collections in public folklife programs around the country. Not only do the contexts of these materials need to be preserved, but there are very real preservation issues, especially for audio and video recordings on inherently unstable magnetic media. Managing and caring for these resources is a huge undertaking and it seems to me that there should be more and more opportunities arising for people interested in working in ethnographic archives as materials find their way into institutional collections and as the aging of mixed-media formats brings preservation issues to the forefront. Subject specialization, cultural sensitivity, fieldwork experience and familiarity with grant-based programs are all things that give folklorists valuable perspective with which to address ethnographic collections in archives. One major challenge is acquiring not only background in ethnographic methods but the training in technological areas like audio and moving image preservation that are vital to being able to oversee collections responsibly. I would encourage anyone interested in this aspect of our field to pursue training through both formal education channels (i.e. library school) and real-world internships.

*Elaine Bradtke*

*Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, English Folk Dance and Song Society, London, England*

It was completely accidental. I started life in the academic world with a degree in music composition and an interest in musicology. Went to Florida State University where a week before starting a masters in musicology, I discovered library science and ethnomusicology were both offered at the university. I immediately signed on to take some library science courses, and by the second term had switched from historical to ethnomusicology. I'd had an interest in all kinds of music growing up in multicultural Miami. As part of the library degree I took an advanced cataloging course and my project was to catalog Dr. Dale Olsen's (ethnomusicologist) collection of field recordings. So that was the beginning.

Yes, there's an awful lot of collections out there that are not properly cared for, organised, or even useful because of a lack of properly trained people to do it. Of course funding is a huge problem, if there was more money, there'd be more archivists.

Preservation and dissemination are the two big challenges I see. Subject specialists are vital to the understanding the subject matter and helping people find the information they're after. For instance a photo in the James Madison Carpenter Collection marked 'sword dancers' by someone who didn't know the subject, was really a group of morris dancers with sticks standing in front of the collector Janet Blunt. The use of paper-based archives is quite different from the way multi-format ethnographic collections are used.

*Cathy Kerst*

*American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC*

I moved to Washington, DC, in 1975 after receiving an MA in Scandinavian Studies [Danish literature]. Before I could figure out where to continue my studies, I took an "interim" job as a

Library of Congress subject cataloger to work with social science books in the Scandinavian and non-German Germanic languages. When the woman who was responsible for folklore and anthropology materials went on maternity leave and I was asked to catalog her books, I realized that folklore was what I had been looking for all along. With an interest in music, traditional and otherwise, an undergraduate degree in history, and graduate studies in literature, I would no longer have to decide amongst a variety of fields, but could study them all! I began to take classes in the American Studies/Folklife Program at George Washington University and later left subject cataloging to work on my doctorate in Folklife there. In 1989, I returned to the Library of Congress, this time to the American Folklife Center where I have worked as an archivist in a variety of capacities, including cataloging, processing, working with American Memory collections, and engaging in archival outreach activities.

I think it is crucial for more people to be trained to work with ethnographic materials in all formats in an archival setting. We also need to give much more thorough training in archival matters to folklore students so that the materials they collect and research will be able to be understood and used archivally. I think it is unfortunate that many people engaging in ethnographic research have so little education in organizing, logging, and labeling their collected materials, in creating finding aids, and in doing the very basic kinds of preparation of their materials before handing them over to an archive. Without such help from fieldworkers, valuable collections may never be fully utilized because archivists, even folklife archivists, may not be able to make sense of their meaning and significance. I hope that soon the professional field techniques of consistent labeling, numbering, logging, and inventorying will be accepted as a routine part of a fieldwork educator's curriculum or even the funding requirements of a grant-giving agency.

I think that access to ethnographic materials is a significant challenge to us as archivists. First, you have to know how to recognize our kinds of stuff, and then you have to be able to describe it in ways that can be found by the public and scholars alike. Although the preservation and digitization of archival ethnographic materials are critical and essential activities for us to be involved with at this point in time, I sometimes worry that we are leaving subject access behind. I'm hoping that the Ethnographic Thesaurus will serve a much-needed niche in this respect by providing a controlled vocabulary of terms that can be used to offer a consistency in the ways we describe ethnographic materials. If we can work to help provide access to ethnographic materials in all areas where they may be found, from small community archives, public sector folklife collections, large government repositories, to academic libraries, special collections, and archives, I think we will be serving our various constituencies very well. But, this will involve the education of archivists not trained in ethnography as well as folklorists not trained in archival techniques.

I think it is necessary for those interested in working in folklife archives as a profession to actually do fieldwork and know from the inside-out what is entailed in doing ethnographic research and documentation. Also, a solid grounding in information and archival science, preservation techniques, or other related technological fields are key areas for future students of ethnographic archival work to pursue. We need a variety of kinds of folklife archivists, some with very specialized knowledge of documentation and preservation issues in the multitude of media formats we encounter in ethnography, but we also need broad-sweep folklife archivists who work as activists to help the public and the archival community at large realize how to identify, value, and work with ethnographic materials.

*Jennifer Post*  
*Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont*

While I am a member of this group, I have only recently renewed my membership in the AFS. I am actually no longer an archivist by profession. I entered the field through the library world fueled by my obsession with research. As a ethnomusicology student in the 1970s I came into contact with materials and issues surrounding access and preservation in the field in India, at the British Museum and School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Library in London, in various university libraries, and finally, in a very small – but not insignificant – collection in Vermont where I have lived since 1979. My doctorate in ethnomusicology and South Asian languages preceded my library degree. I got my MLS (MS) at Simmons in order to attain professional status (and salary) for a job I would be doing anyway: organizing the field data, manuscripts, and other archival materials that comprised the Helen Hartness Flanders Ballad Collection at Middlebury College. As archivist for twenty years, I had an opportunity to consider preservation and access issues on a small scale; providing item access to materials amassed by Flanders and others over a thirty-five year period. As a full-time faculty member today, it is difficult to stay abreast of the technologically complex and increasingly politicized issues connected to preservation and access. Yet I remain very interested in offering archival experiences to my students so they will not lose the important lessons these products of history provide.

In retrospect, as the administration considers disbanding the collection here at Middlebury College, I feel that we need to more actively network as archivists in both small and large collections. Support for maintenance of small collections in historical societies, liberal arts library collections, and organizational archives, has never been strong, and today it is dwindling further. We need to educate librarians, archivists and administrators alike to value our unique collections and to recognize their use in a wide range of settings.

I feel we must reinvigorate the fields we represent with greater interest in our materials. This means that, yes, we need to encourage students interested in working in folklore and ethnographic archives to have advanced degrees. Their first-hand knowledge of procedures and practices in these disciplines will help their processing and proselytizing skills enormously. Their higher status in the organization will help them to interact more fully with academic and research oriented folklorists and ethnomusicologists. And I feel we all need to develop greater administrative skills so that we too can more effectively respond to the systems we are part of.

*Ted McGraw*  
*North American Archive Committee of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, Rochester, New York*

This does not exactly fit the mold of others who have responded to your question, but I'll tell this story because it is different. I took my degree in the 1950's when the hot button subject area was technology. So I was a physicist with the Air Force for six years and then an engineer for the next thirty-three years wearing several different hats in different companies. It was an interesting and satisfying career until I retired five years ago. During all that time, my 'hobby' has been collecting, preserving, and presenting folklore.

The radio show I started thirty years ago is still going strong and has provided the opportunity to collect flyers and posters of local events here in Rochester. I also keep binders of interesting articles,

artist's bios, and news clippings for the radio. The pride of my collection however is a music archive of over 6000 78's, tapes, albums and CDs.

Yes, I still collect 78's. My technical background with help from an audio engineering course and much experience, allows me to make good transfers of 78's which I use liberally on the radio.

I am also a folk musician and have been involved with a world wide cultural organization since 1986. I am chairman of the North American Archive Committee of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann and have the responsibility for documenting Irish music using the fifty branches in the US and Canada as collection agencies. We have an agreement with Boston College to be the repository, because they already have a professionally staffed archive as part of their Irish studies program. It's an ideal match for both organizations and is working very well.

For a number of years I have given presentations at the annual 'Roundtable' of Folklorists in New York State and they have honored me with the title of Community Scholar for which I am very grateful. I continually rely on the help and guidance of my many friends who are professional folklorists and archivists. I think that the Community Scholar concept could be expanded and used more effectively across the country by folklorists and archivists - there is so much work to be done!

Other needs include keeping up with: 1) media technology and preservation; and 2) cataloguing techniques and technologies with emphasis on accessibility of materials and cross referencing of related materials.